A CentaUr's Life

9

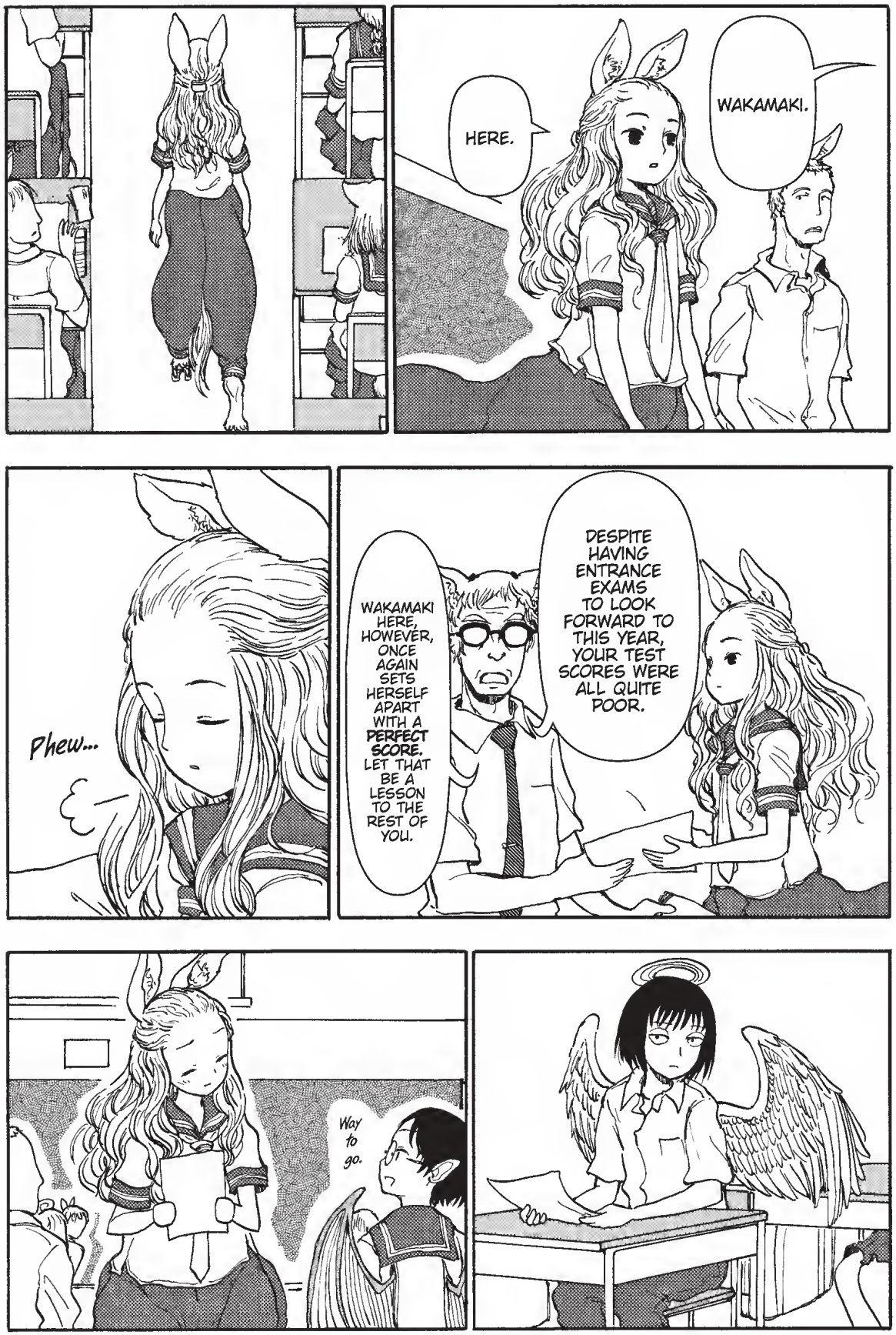
story & art

KEI MURAYAMA

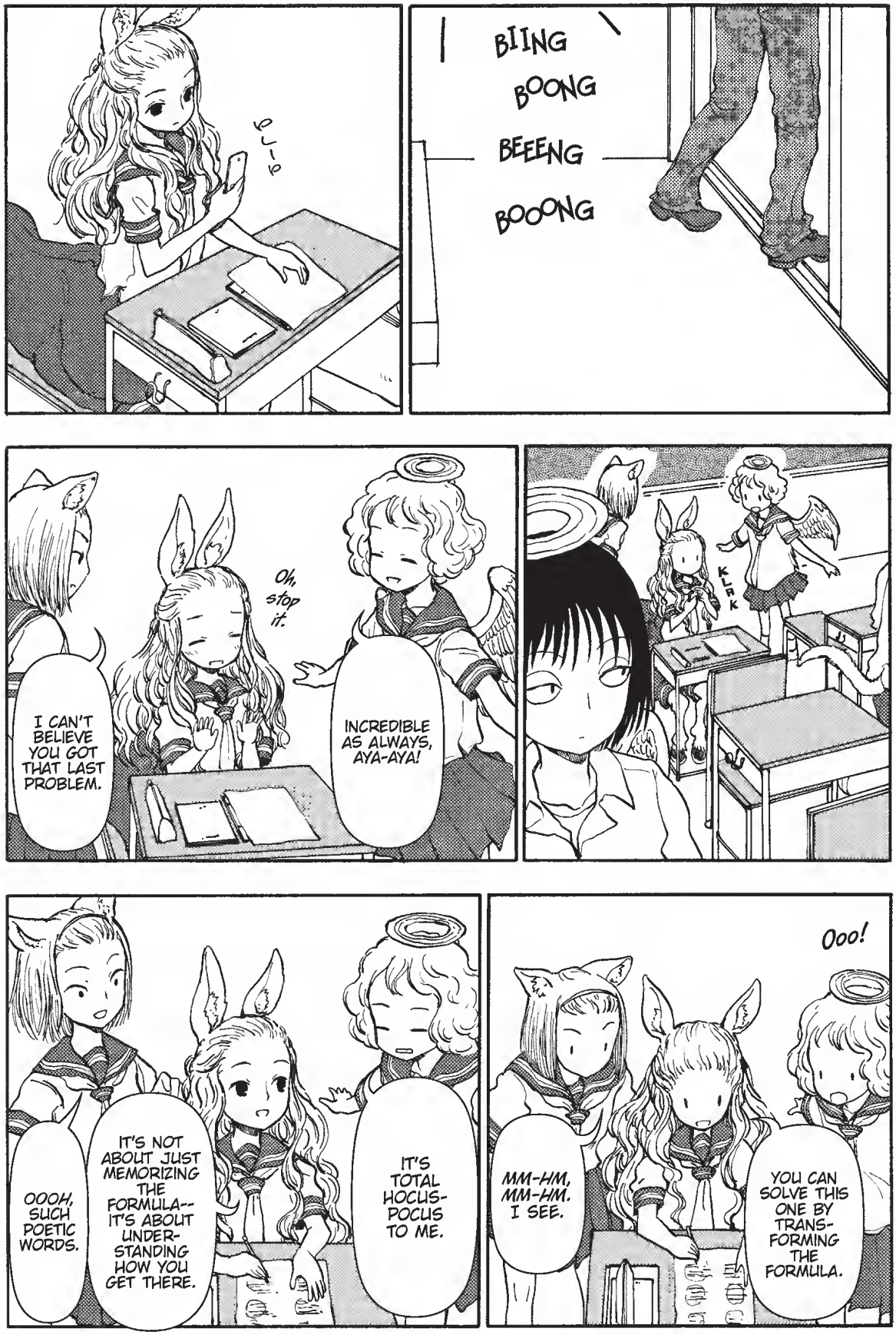
A Centaur's Life 9

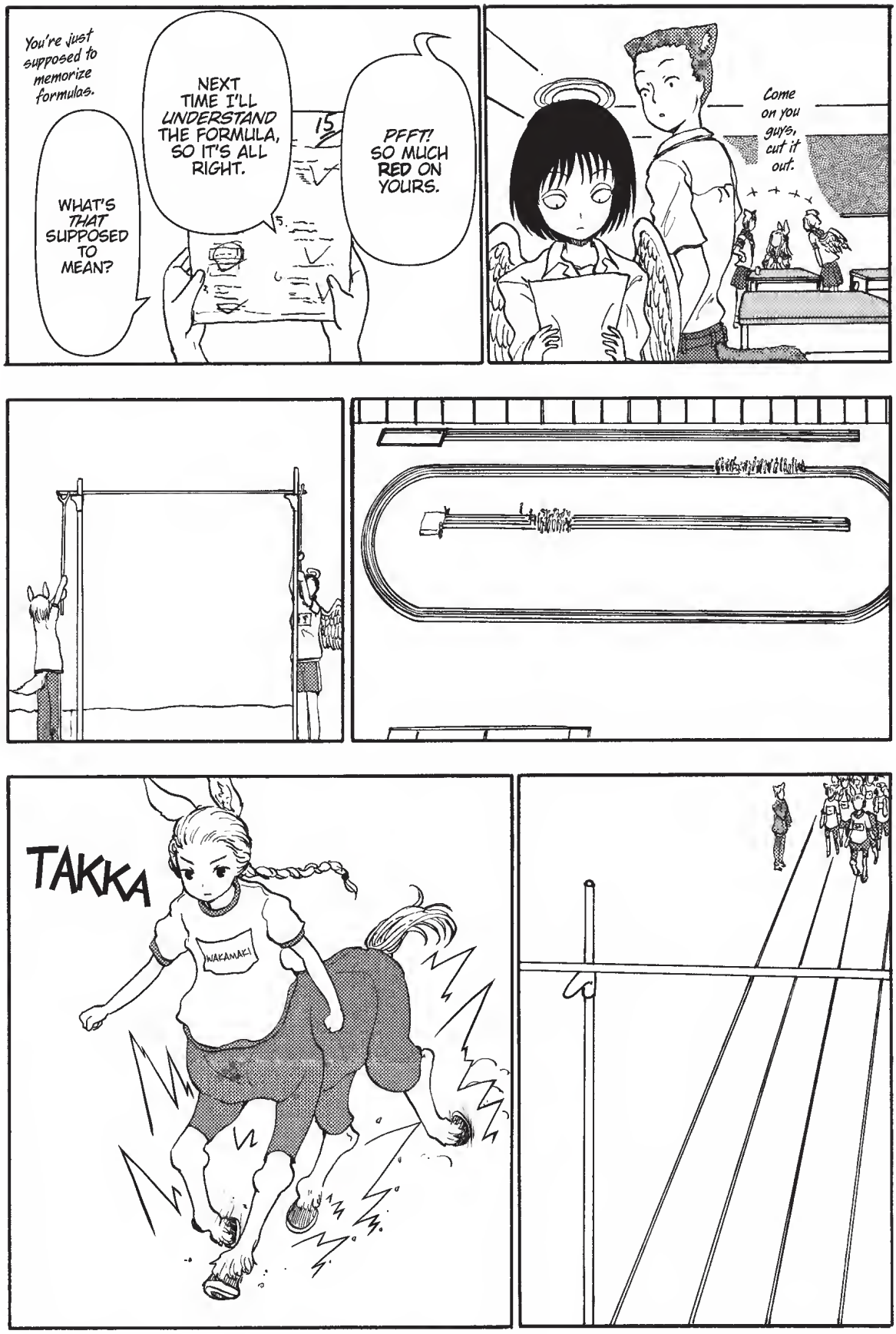
PRESENTED BY

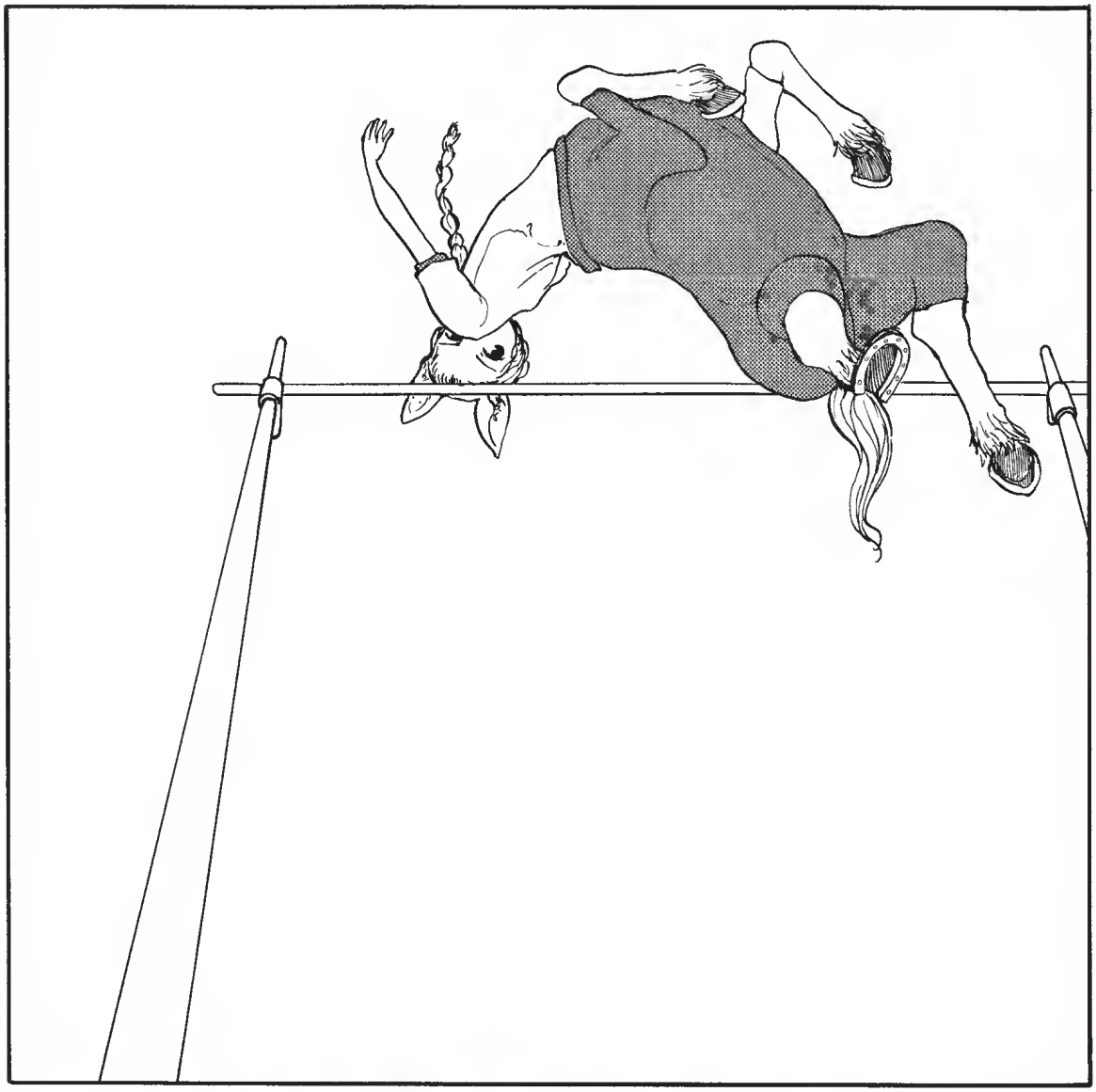
KEI MURAYAMA

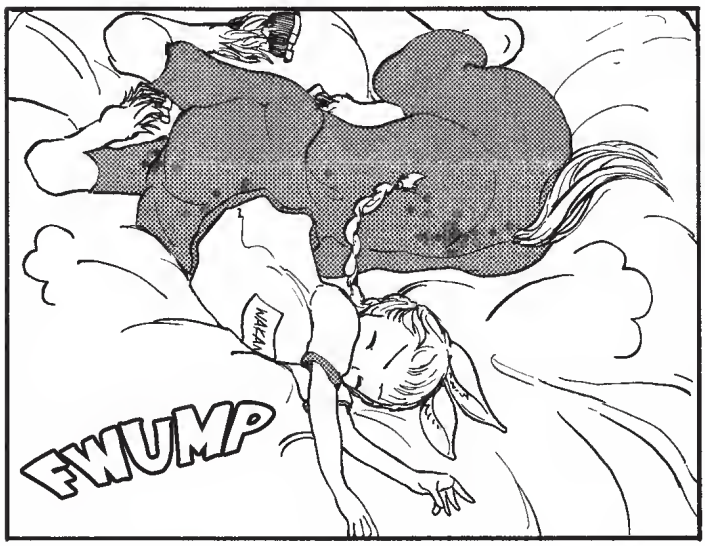

HERE.
WAKAMAKI.
Phew...
DESPITE HAVING ENTRANCE EXAMS TO LOOK FORWARD TO THIS YEAR, YOUR TEST SCORES WERE ALL QUITE POOR.
WAKAMAKI HERE, HOWEVER, ONCE AGAIN SETS HERSELF APART WITH A **PERFECT SCORE.** LET THAT BE A LESSON TO THE REST OF YOU.
Way to go.

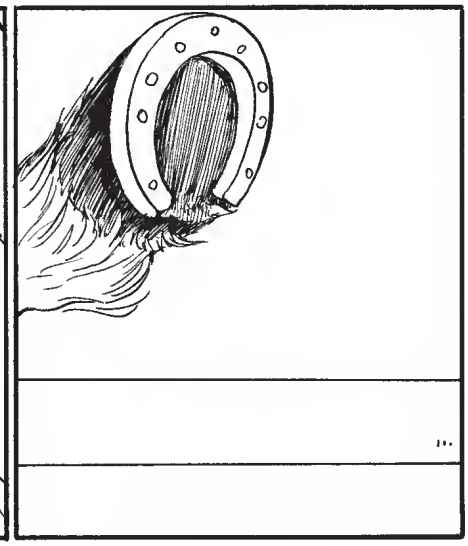
CHAPTER 53
Math Test

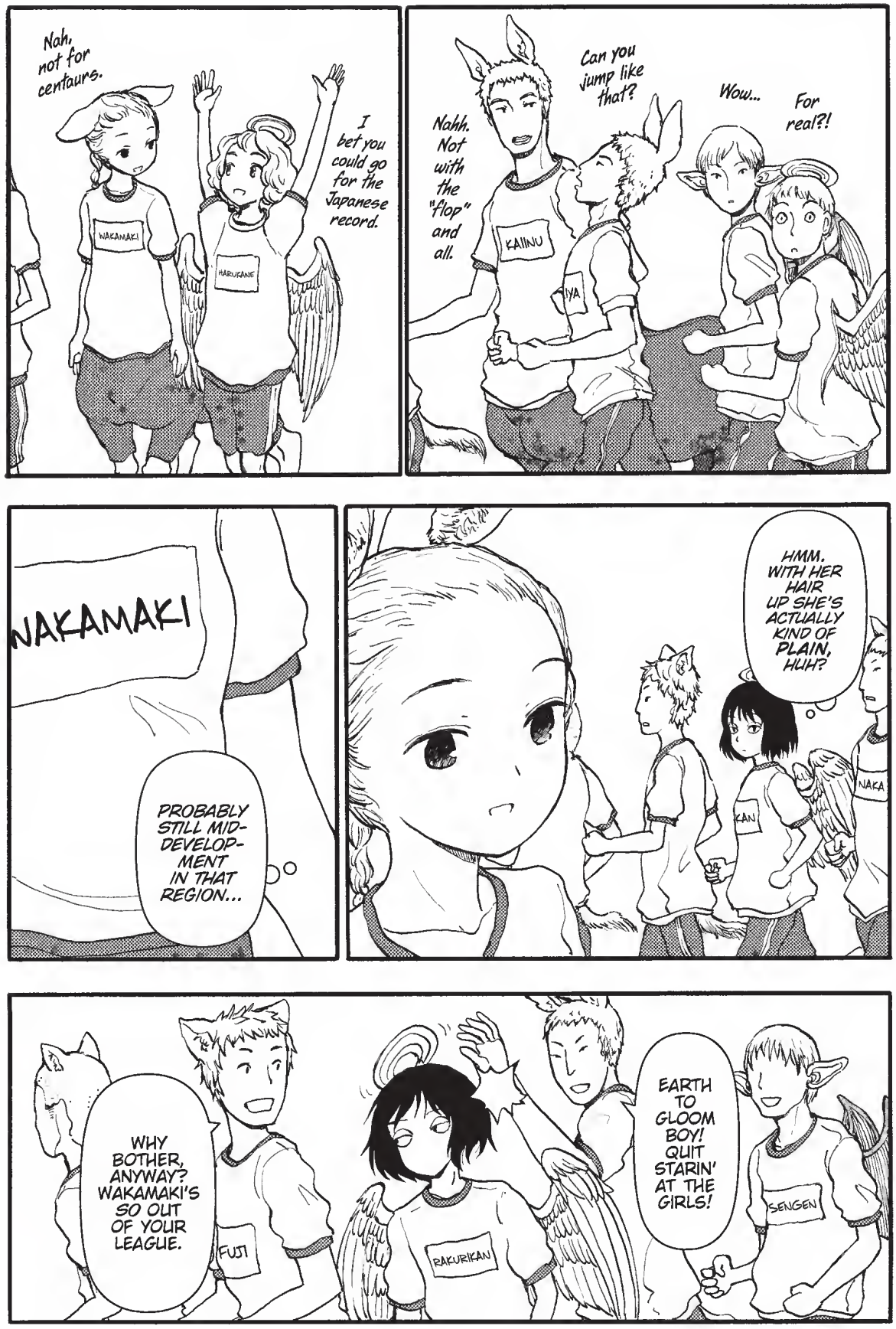

BIING
BOONG
BEEENG
BOOONG
Oh, stop it.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GOT THAT LAST PROBLEM.
INCREDIBLE AS ALWAYS, AYA-AYA!
KLRK
OOOH, SUCH POETIC WORDS.
IT'S NOT ABOUT JUST MEMORIZING THE FORMULA-- IT'S ABOUT UNDER-STANDING HOW YOU GET THERE.
IT'S TOTAL HOCUS-POCUS TO ME.
MM-HM, MM-HM. I SEE.
Ooo!
YOU CAN SOLVE THIS ONE BY TRANS-FORMING THE FORMULA.

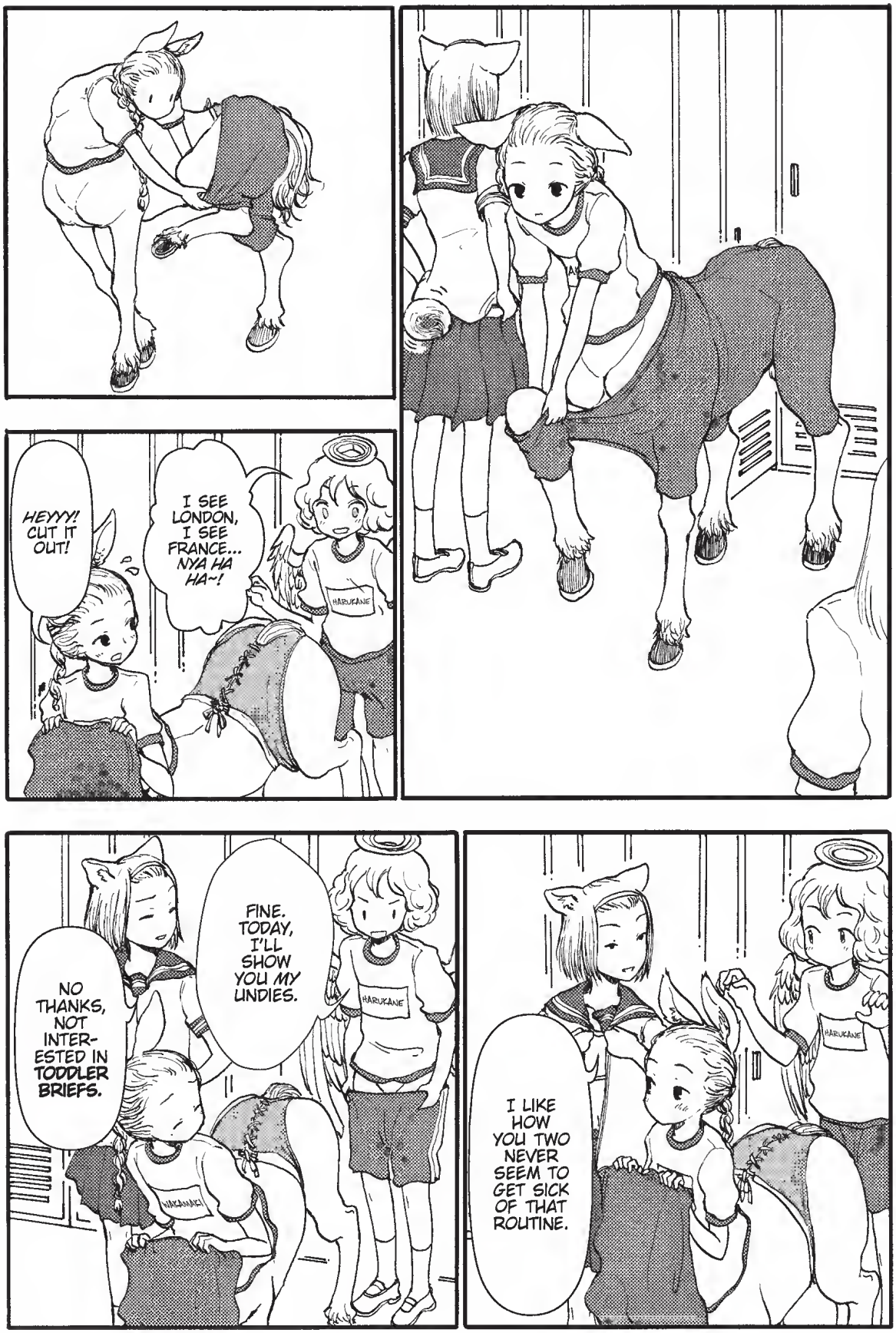

You're just supposed to memorize formulas.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
NEXT TIME I'LL UNDERSTAND THE FORMULA, SO IT'S ALL RIGHT.
15
PFFT! SO MUCH RED ON YOURS.
Come on you guys, cut it out.
TAKKA
WAKAMAKI

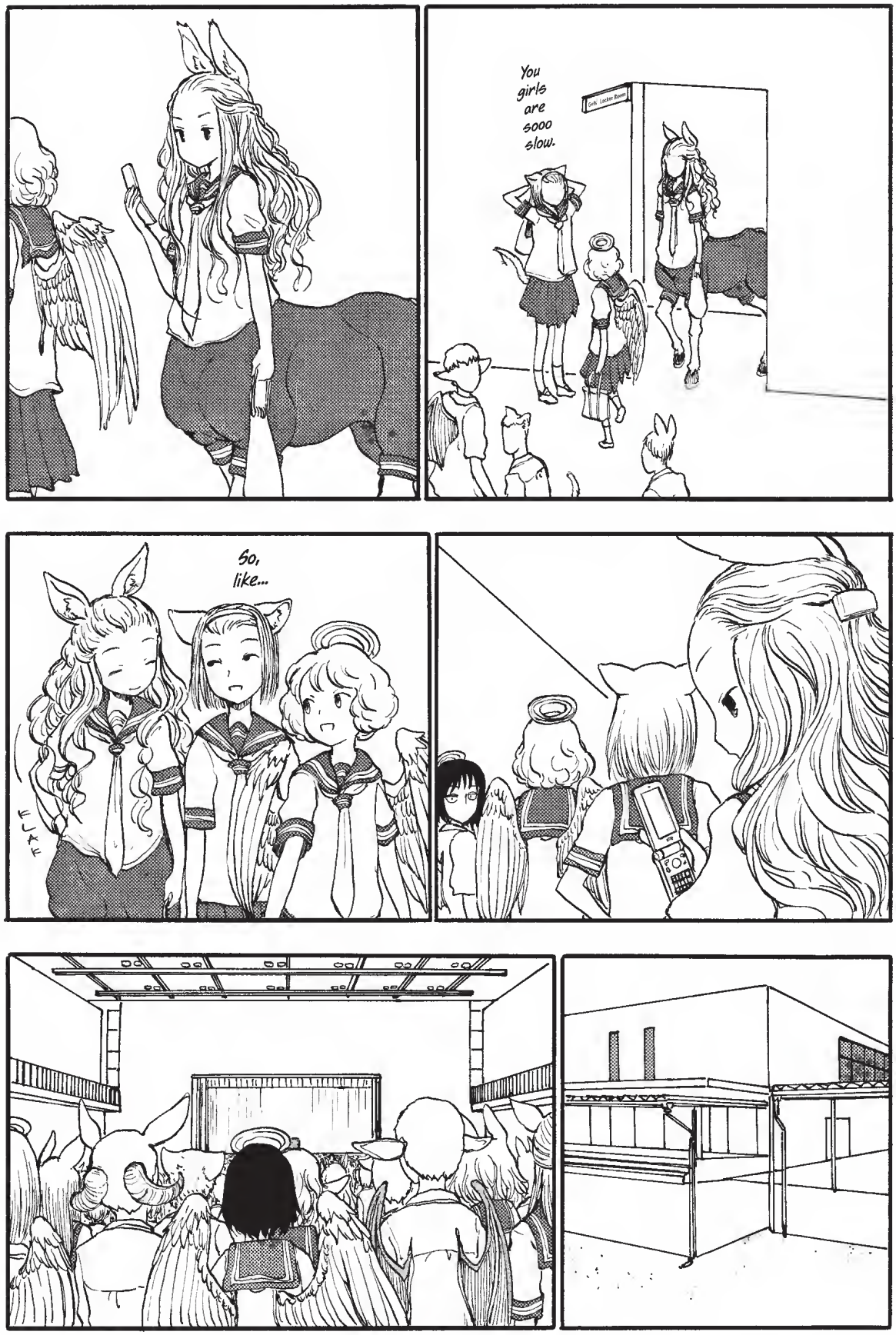


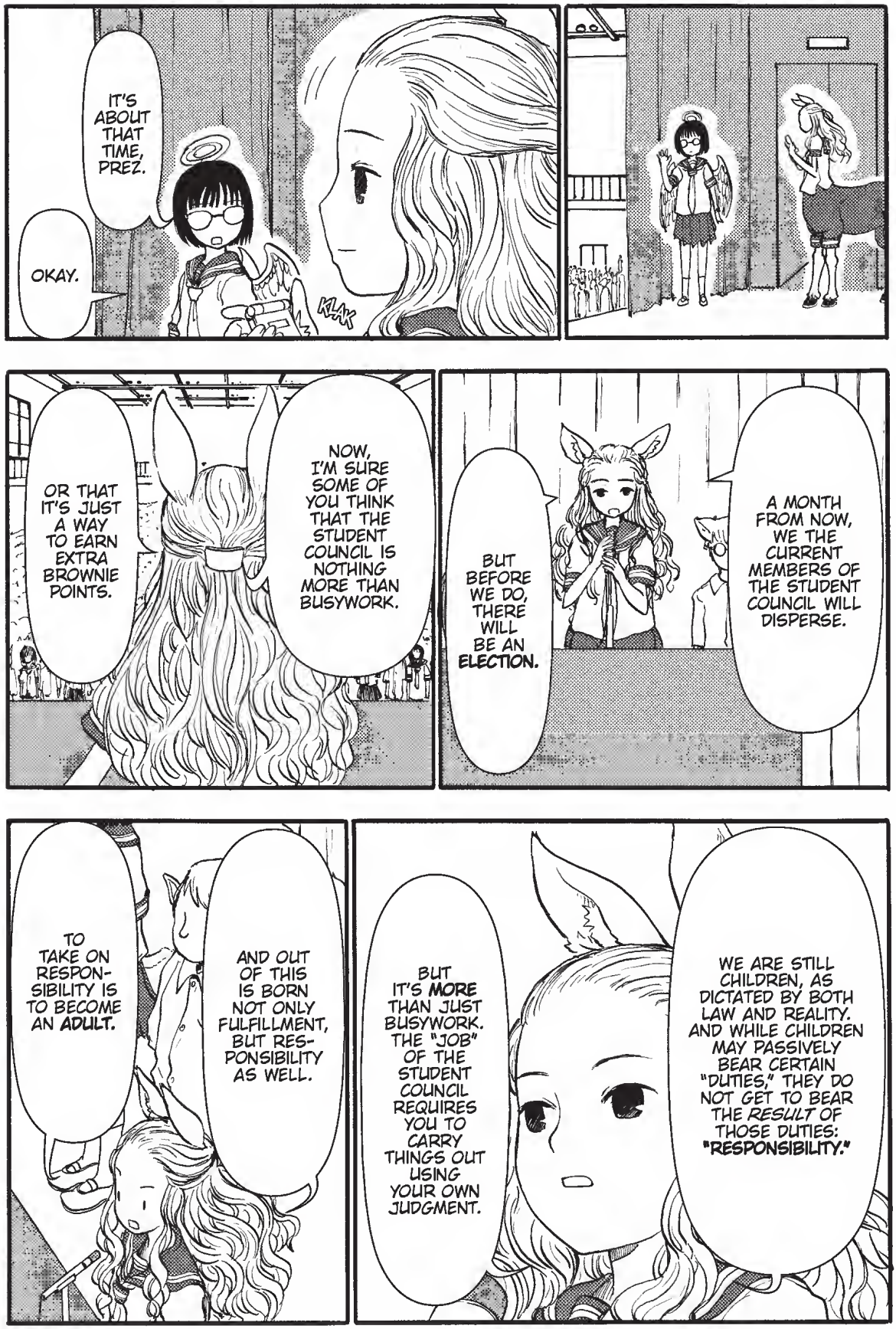

WAHAA!
FWUMP

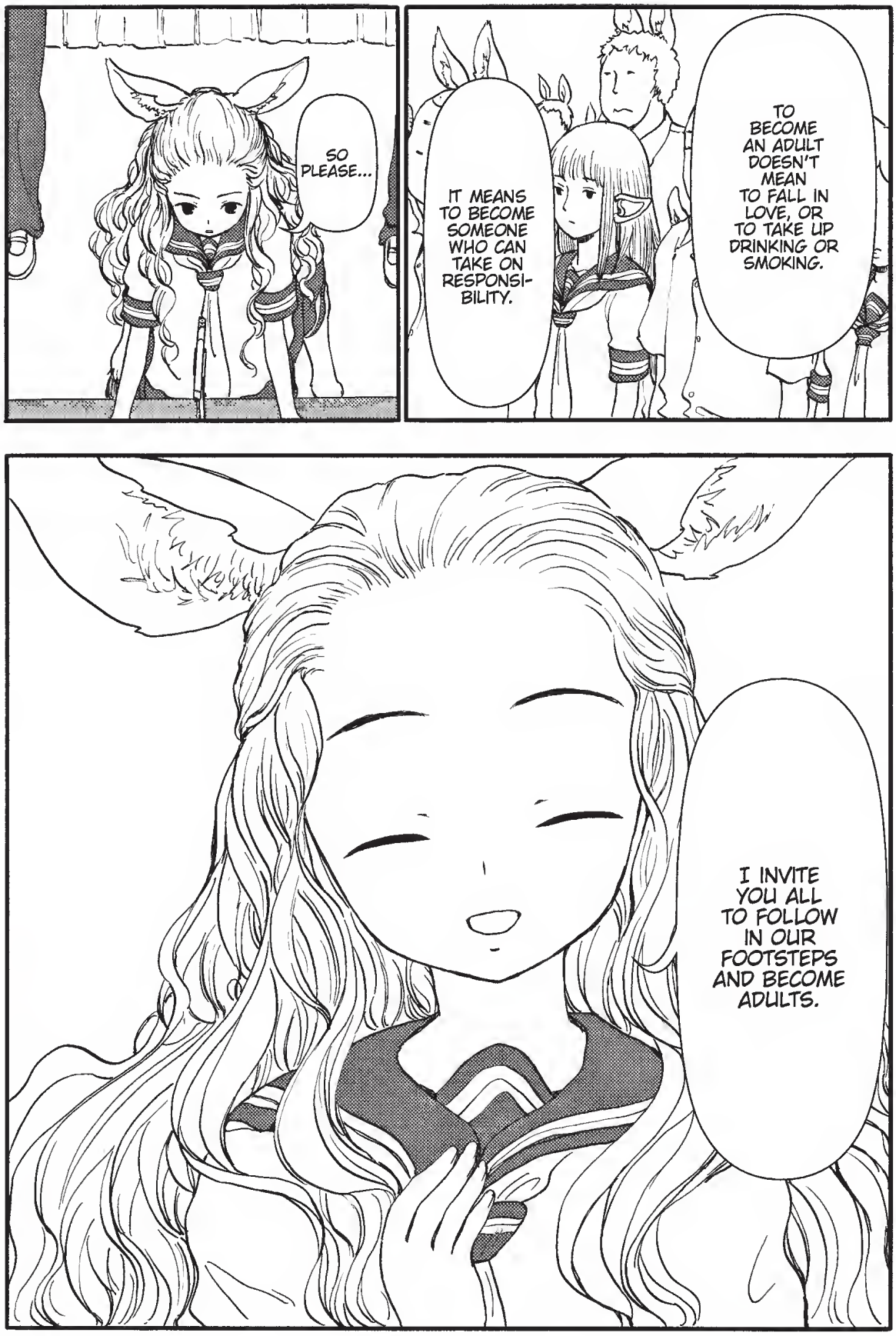


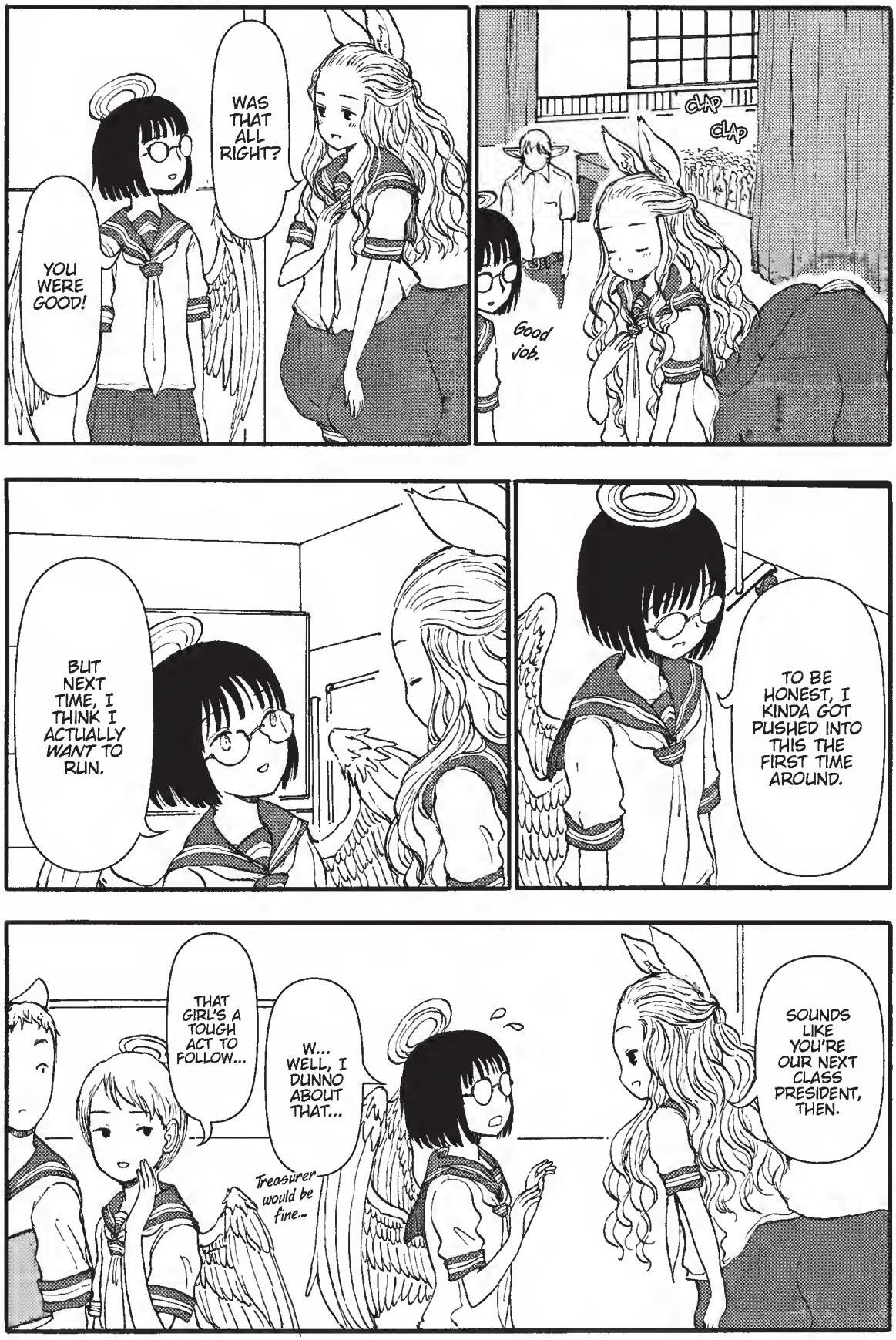

Nah, not for centaurs.
I bet you could go for the Japanese record.
WAKAMAKI
HARUKANE
Nahh. Not with the "flop" and all.
Can you jump like that?
Wow...
For real?!
KAIINU
IYA
WAKAMAKI
PROBABLY STILL MID-DEVELOP-MENT IN THAT REGION...
HMM. WITH HER HAIR UP SHE'S ACTUALLY KIND OF PLAIN, HUH?
NAKA
KAN
WHY BOTHER, ANYWAY? WAKAMAKI'S SO OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE.
FUJI
RAKURIKAN
EARTH TO GLOOM BOY! QUIT STARIN' AT THE GIRLS!
SENGEN

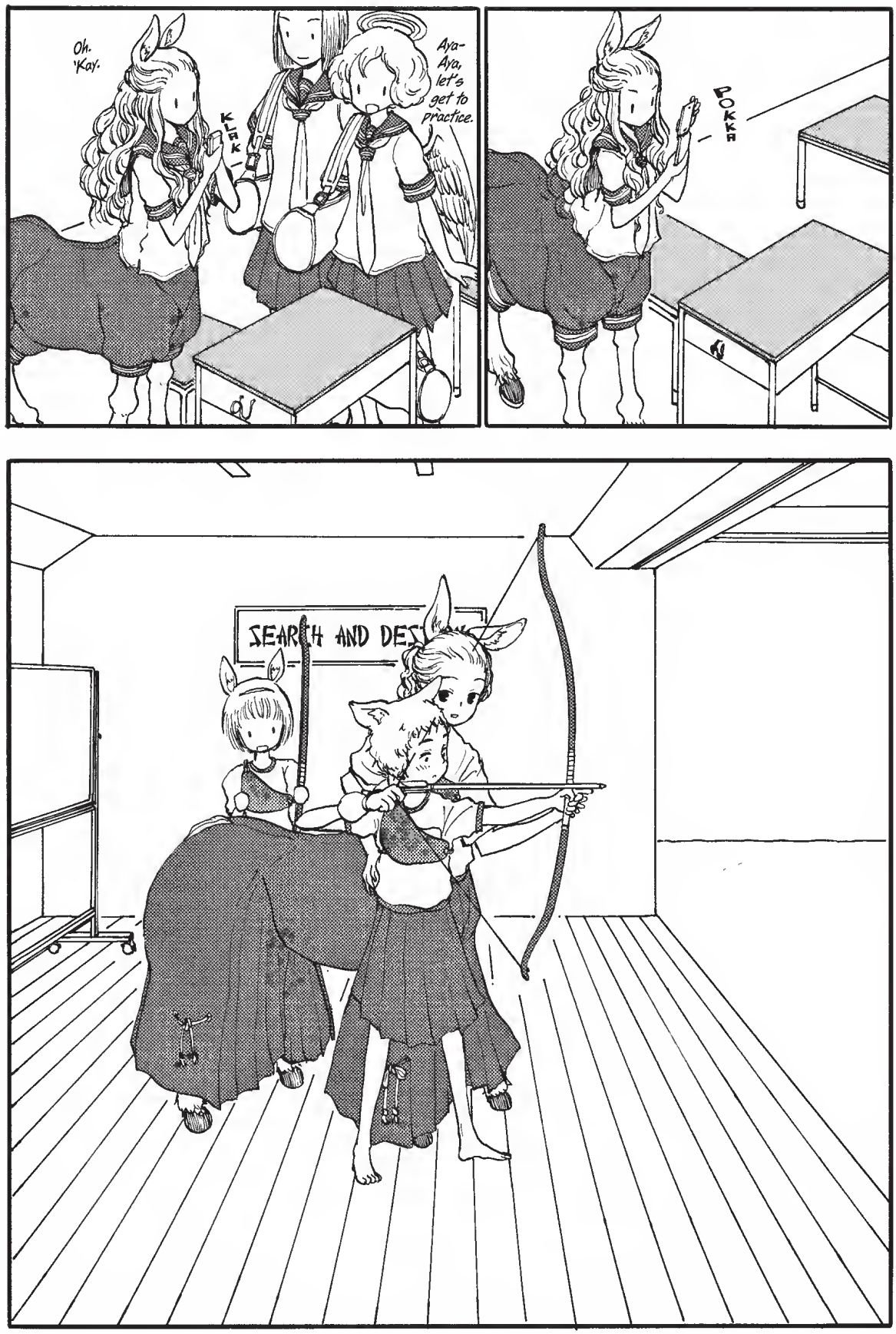

HEYYY! CUT IT OUT!
I SEE LONDON, I SEE FRANCE... NYA HA HA~!
HARUKANE
NO THANKS, NOT INTER-ESTED IN TODDLER BRIEFS.
FINE. TODAY, I'LL SHOW YOU MY UNDIES.
I LIKE HOW YOU TWO NEVER SEEM TO GET SICK OF THAT ROUTINE.

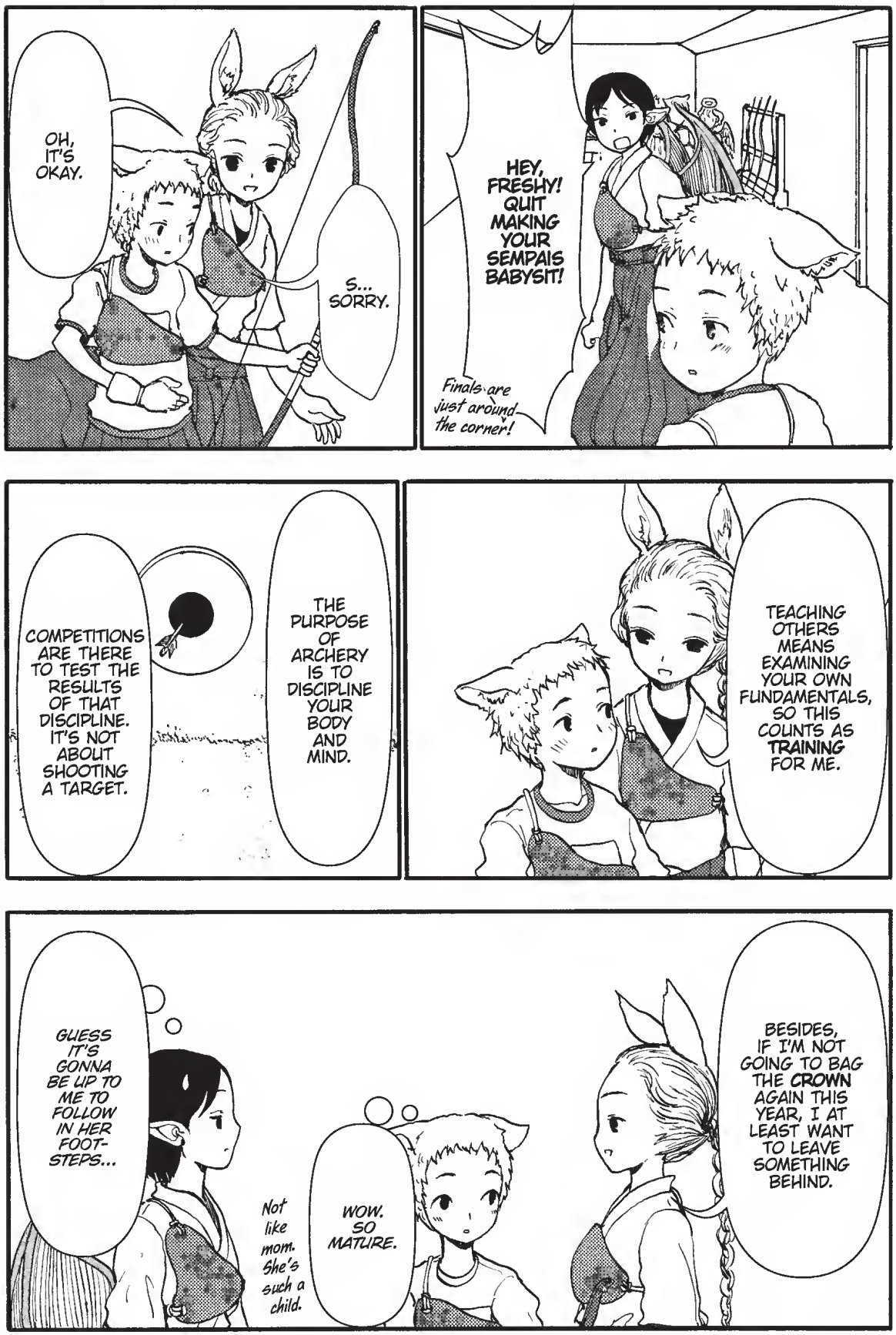

You girls are sooo slow.
Girls' Locker Room
So, like...
UJAL

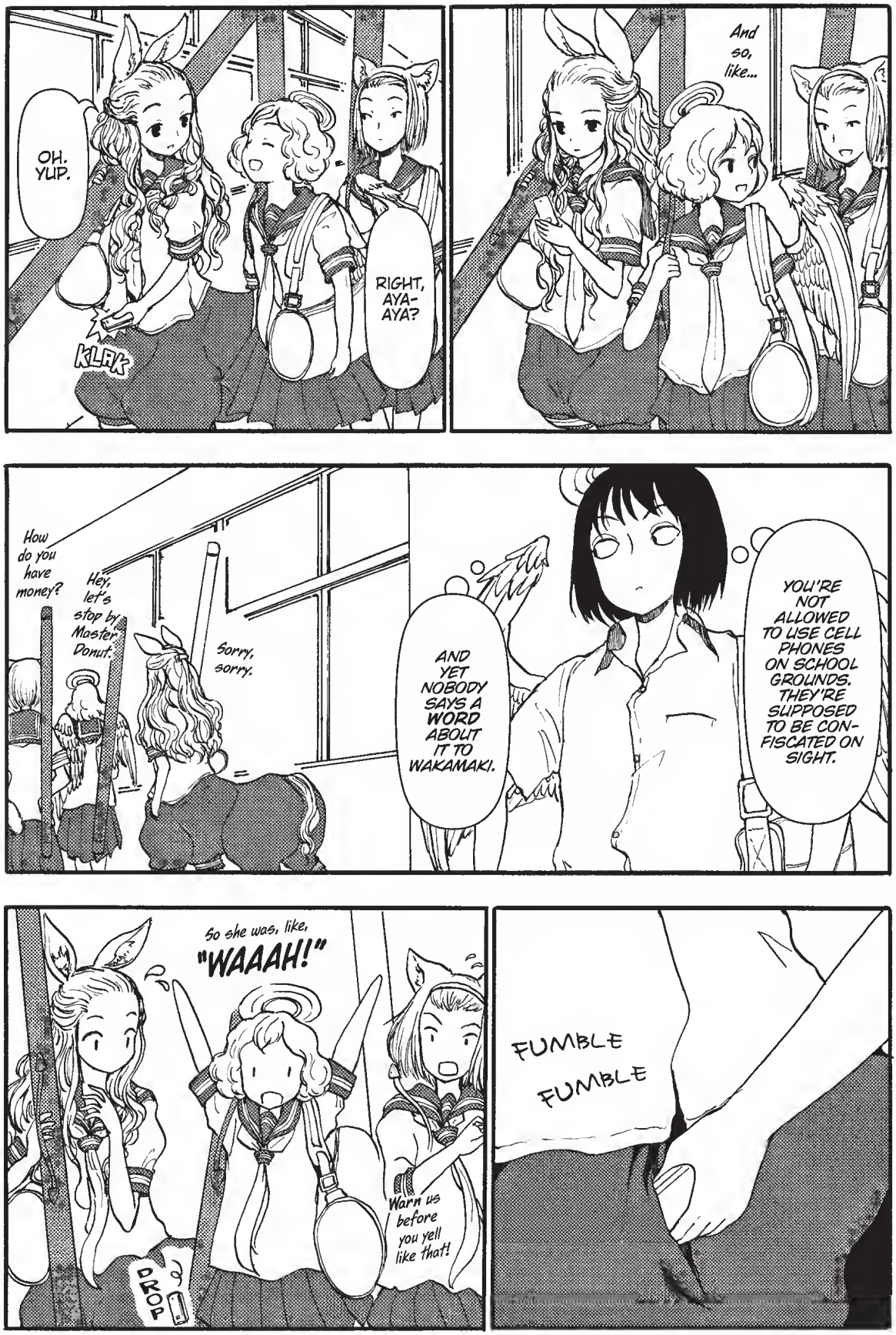

IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME, PREZ.
OKAY.
KLAK
A MONTH FROM NOW, WE THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL WILL DISPERSE.
BUT BEFORE WE DO, THERE WILL BE AN **ELECTION.**
NOW, I'M SURE SOME OF YOU THINK THAT THE STUDENT COUNCIL IS NOTHING MORE THAN BUSYWORK.
OR THAT IT'S JUST A WAY TO EARN EXTRA BROWNIE POINTS.
WE ARE STILL CHILDREN, AS DICTATED BY BOTH LAW AND REALITY. AND WHILE CHILDREN MAY PASSIVELY BEAR CERTAIN "DUTIES," THEY DO NOT GET TO BEAR THE *RESULT* OF THOSE DUTIES: **"RESPONSIBILITY."**
BUT IT'S **MORE** THAN JUST BUSYWORK. THE "JOB" OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL REQUIRES YOU TO CARRY THINGS OUT USING YOUR OWN JUDGMENT.
AND OUT OF THIS IS BORN NOT ONLY FULFILLMENT, BUT RESPONSIBILITY AS WELL.
TO TAKE ON RESPONSIBILITY IS TO BECOME AN **ADULT.**


SO PLEASE...
TO BECOME AN ADULT DOESN'T MEAN TO FALL IN LOVE, OR TO TAKE UP DRINKING OR SMOKING.
IT MEANS TO BECOME SOMEONE WHO CAN TAKE ON RESPONSI-BILITY.
I INVITE YOU ALL TO FOLLOW IN OUR FOOTSTEPS AND BECOME ADULTS.

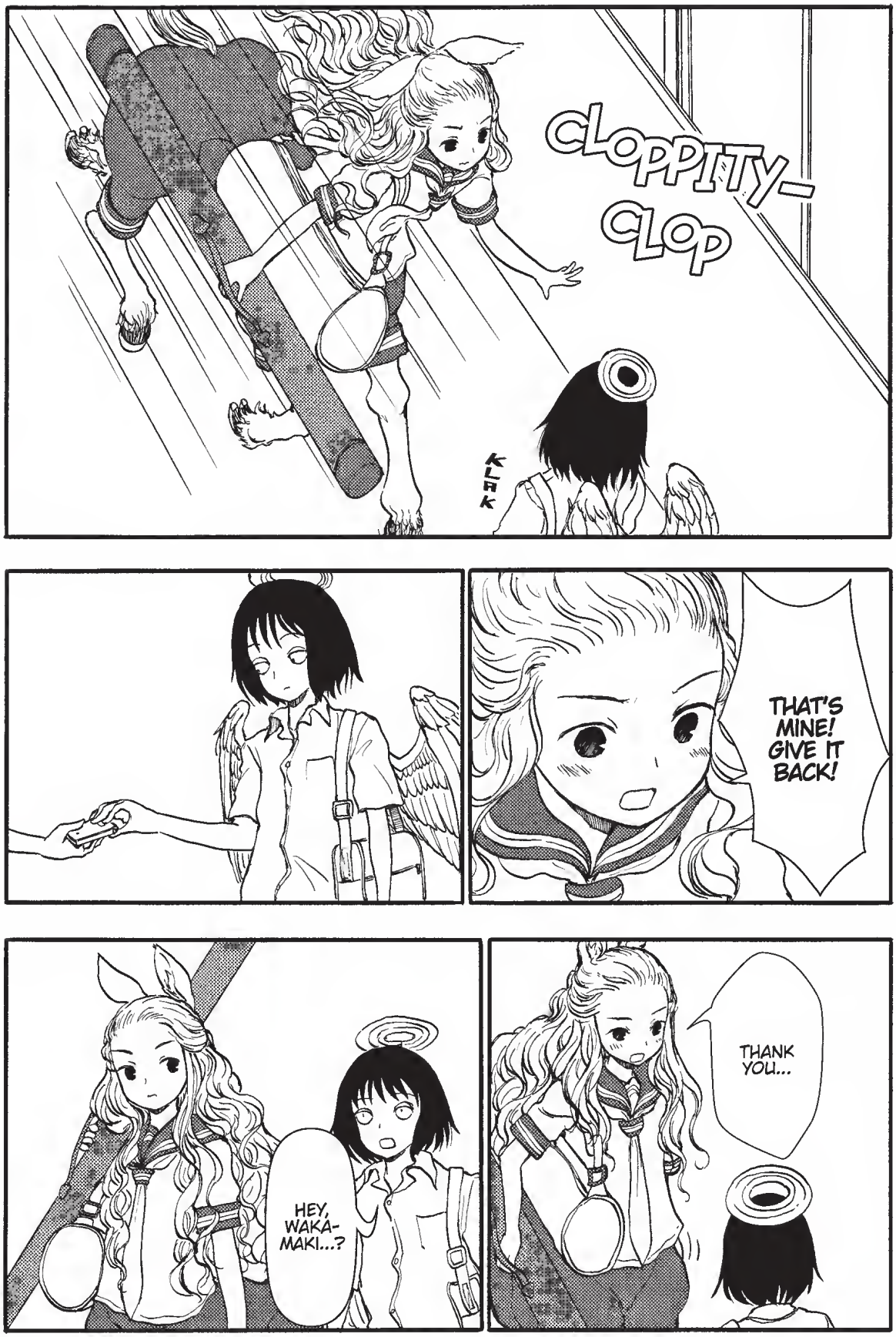

WAS THAT ALL RIGHT?
YOU WERE GOOD!
CLAP
CLAP
Good job.
BUT NEXT TIME, I THINK I ACTUALLY WANT TO RUN.
TO BE HONEST, I KINDA GOT PUSHED INTO THIS THE FIRST TIME AROUND.
THAT GIRL'S A TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW...
W... WELL, I DUNNO ABOUT THAT...
Treasurer would be fine...
SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE OUR NEXT CLASS PRESIDENT, THEN.


Oh. 'Kay.
Klak
Aya- Aya, let's get to practice.
Pokka
SEARCH AND DES

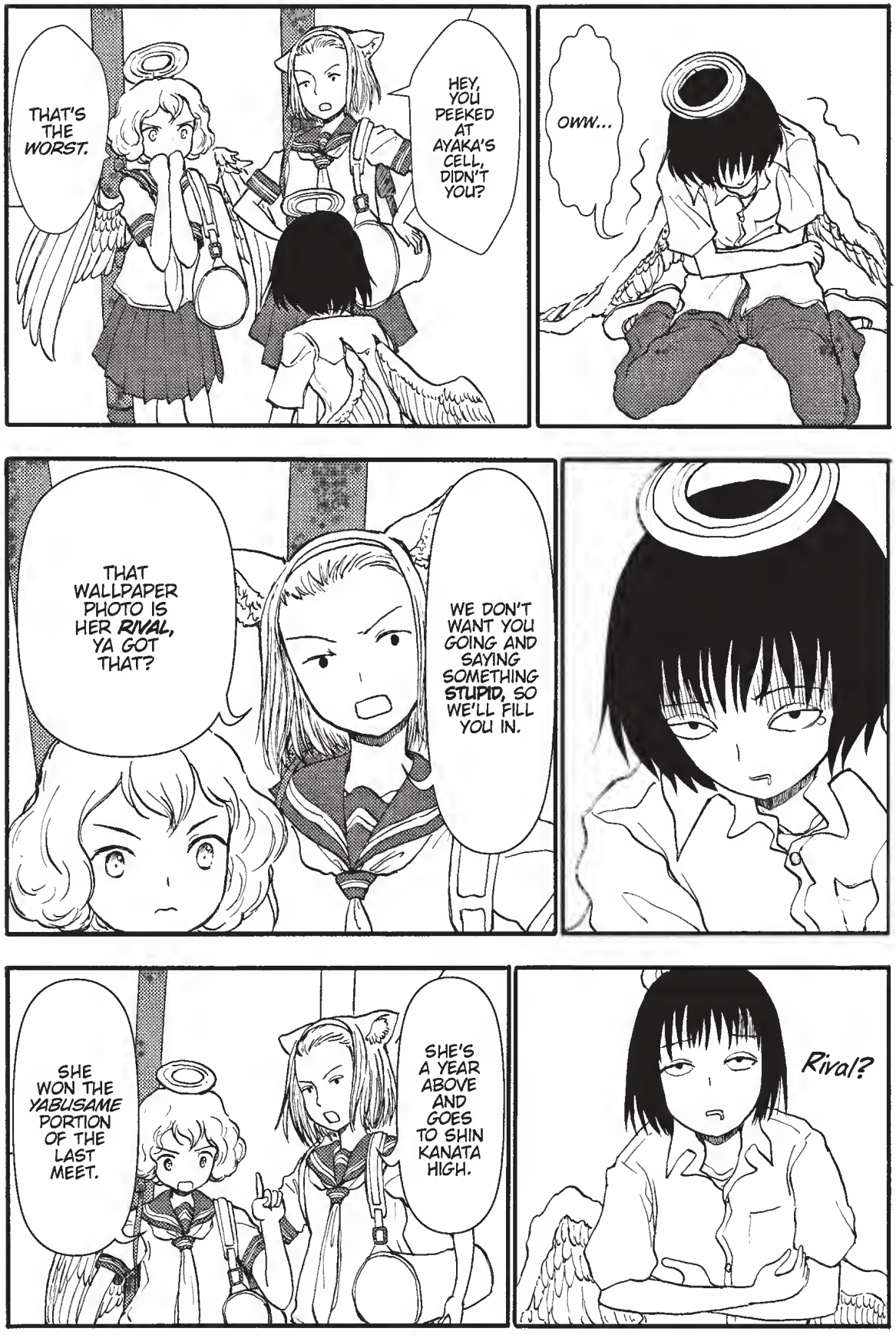

OH, IT'S OKAY.
S... SORRY.
HEY, FRESHY! QUIT MAKING YOUR SEMPAIS BABYSIT!
Finals are just around the corner!
COMPETITIONS ARE THERE TO TEST THE RESULTS OF THAT DISCIPLINE. IT'S NOT ABOUT SHOOTING A TARGET.
THE PURPOSE OF ARCHERY IS TO DISCIPLINE YOUR BODY AND MIND.
TEACHING OTHERS MEANS EXAMINING YOUR OWN FUNDAMENTALS, SO THIS COUNTS AS TRAINING FOR ME.
GUESS IT'S GONNA BE UP TO ME TO FOLLOW IN HER FOOT-STEPS...
Not like mom. She's such a child.
WOW. SO MATURE.
BESIDES, IF I'M NOT GOING TO BAG THE CROWN AGAIN THIS YEAR, I AT LEAST WANT TO LEAVE SOMETHING BEHIND.


OH. YUP.
KLAK
RIGHT, AYA-AYA?
And so, like...
How do you have money?
Hey, let's stop by Master Donut.
Sorry, sorry.
AND YET NOBODY SAYS A WORD ABOUT IT TO WAKAMAKI.
YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO USE CELL PHONES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS. THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE CONFISCATED ON SIGHT.
So she was, like, "WAAAH!"
DROP
Warn us before you yell like that!
FUMBLE
FUMBLE

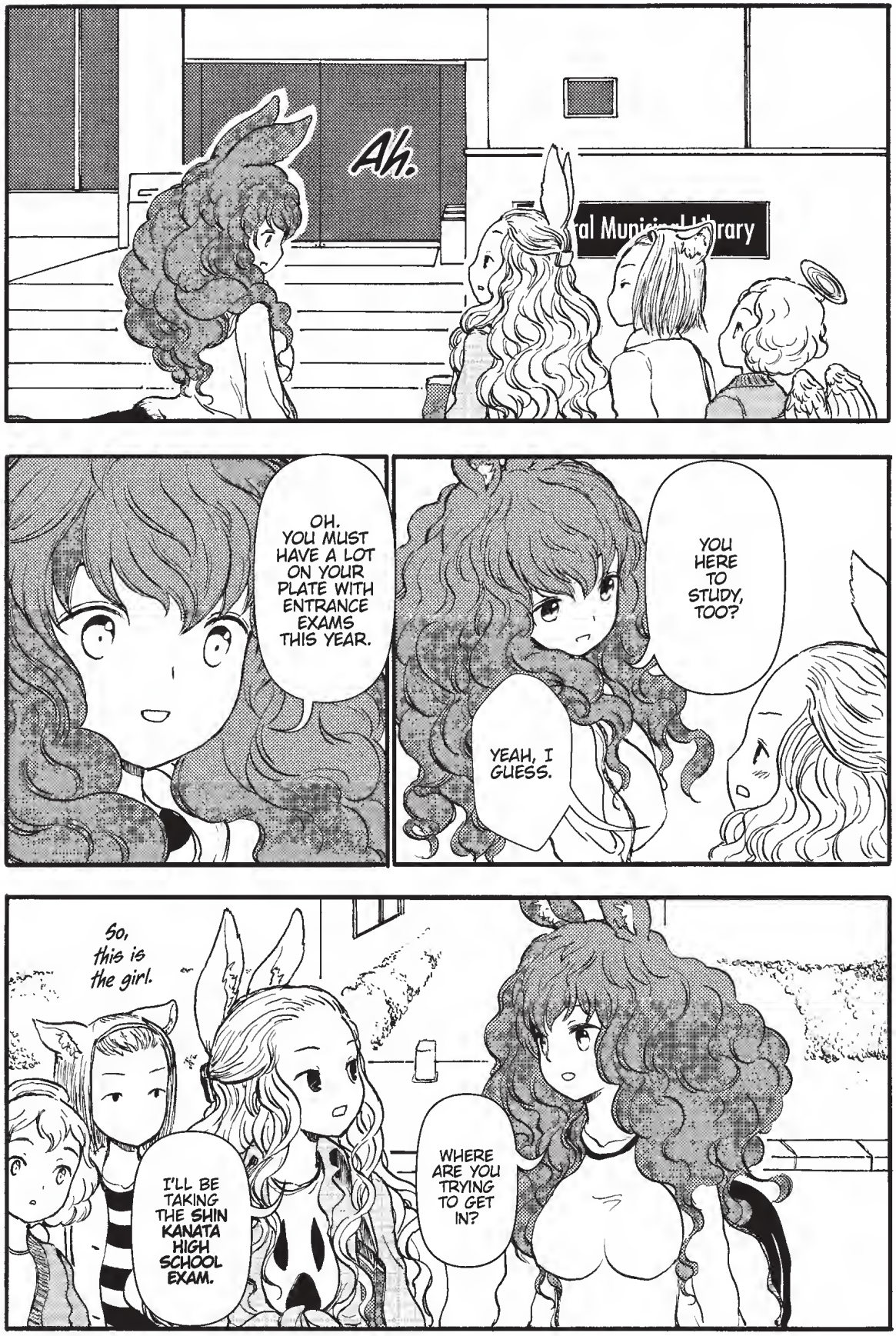
POKE
SNIFF
SNIFF
What the--?!

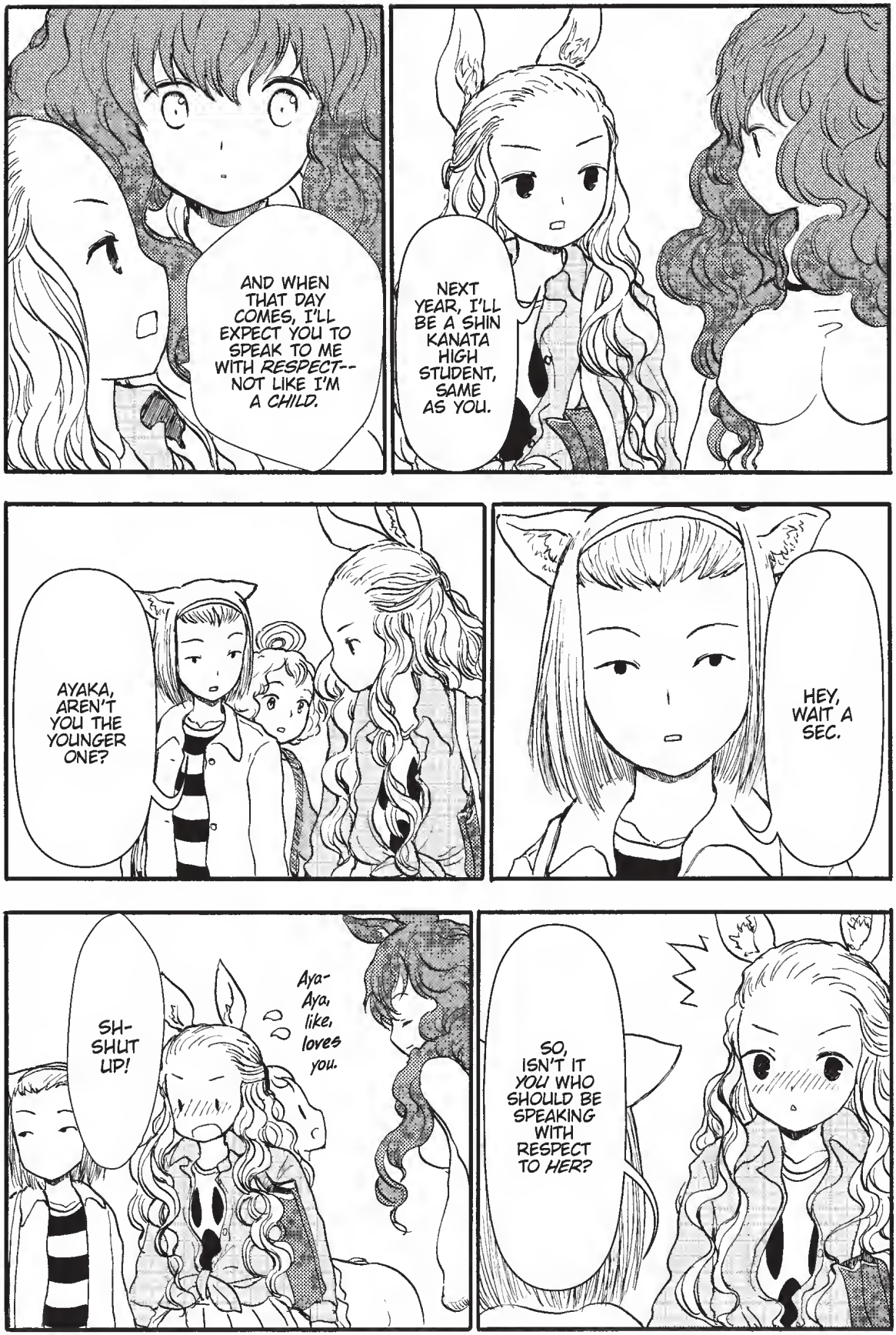

CLOPPITY-CLOP
KLAK
THAT'S MINE! GIVE IT BACK!
HEY, WAKA-MAKI...?
THANK YOU...

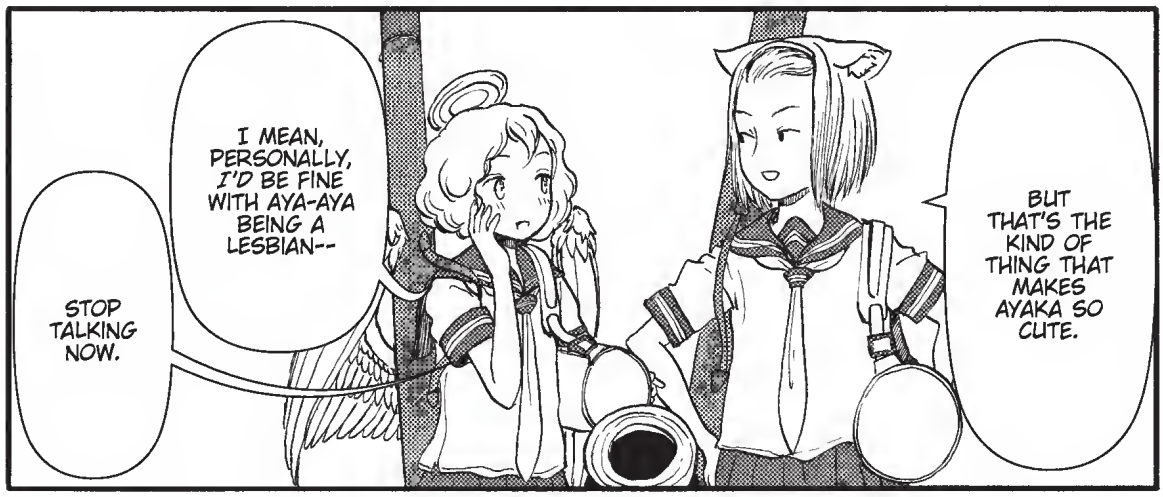
WHIRL
ARE YOU A LESBIAN?
KA-WHUMP
CLOP CLOP CLOP
A... Ayaka...

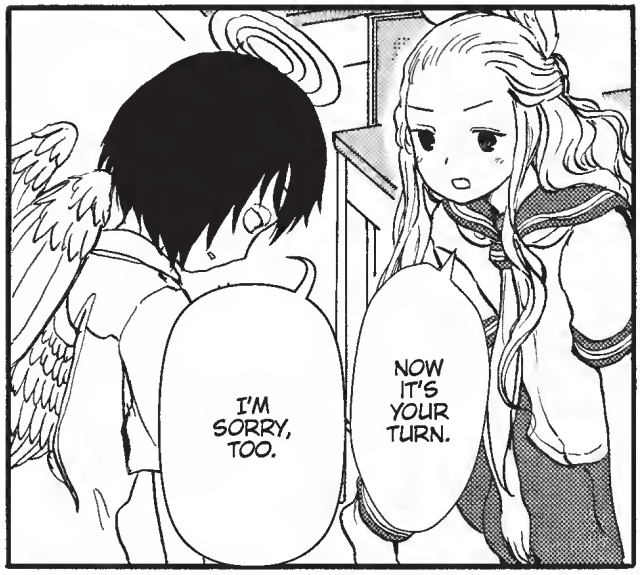

HEY, YOU PEEKED AT AYAKA'S CELL, DIDN'T YOU?
THAT'S THE *WORST.*
Oww...
WE DON'T WANT YOU GOING AND SAYING SOMETHING **STUPID**, SO WE'LL FILL YOU IN.
THAT WALLPAPER PHOTO IS HER ***RIVAL***, YA GOT THAT?
SHE'S A YEAR ABOVE AND GOES TO SHIN KANATA HIGH.
SHE WON THE *YABUSAME* PORTION OF THE LAST MEET.
Rival?

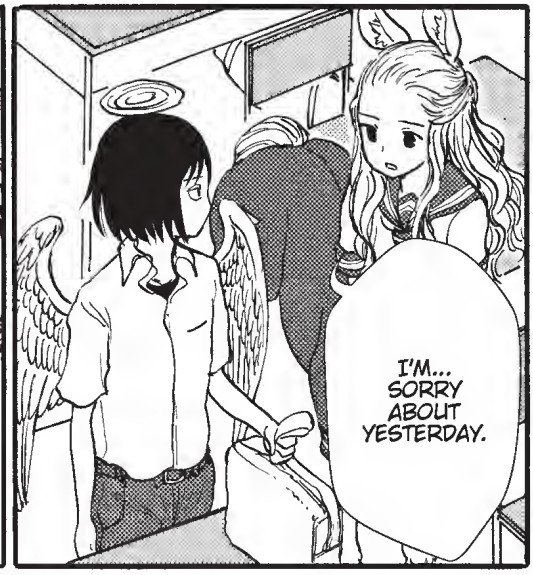
BUT WITHOUT A RIVAL, AYAKA WOULD NEVER GET BY.
Aaah~!
SHE DOESN'T *LOOK* ALL THAT SPECIAL, IF YOU ASK ME.
Just because she's big and beautiful...
YOU MUST SUPPORT THIS HOUSE OF WAKA-MAKI.
AND Y'SEE, HER OLDEST BROTHER IS A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING **JAILBIRD,** AND HER NEXT OLDEST BROTHER WENT TO A STATE SCHOOL, BUT HAS **SHIRKED** HIS SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND BECOME A **SHUT-IN.**
SHE COMES FROM SOMETHING OF AN ESTAB-LISHED UPPER-CLASS FAMILY.
BUT AYA-AYA *DOES* KINDA TURN INTO A DIFFERENT PERSON IN FRONT OF THAT GIRL, HUH?
I MEAN, I'M A LITTLE BUMMED THAT SHE DOESN'T CONSIDER *ME* A RIVAL, BUT WHATEVS.


Ah.
rary
OH. YOU MUST HAVE A LOT ON YOUR PLATE WITH ENTRANCE EXAMS THIS YEAR.
YOU HERE TO STUDY, TOO?
YEAH, I GUESS.
So, this is the girl.
I'LL BE TAKING THE SHIN KANATA HIGH SCHOOL EXAM.
WHERE ARE YOU TRYING TO GET IN?

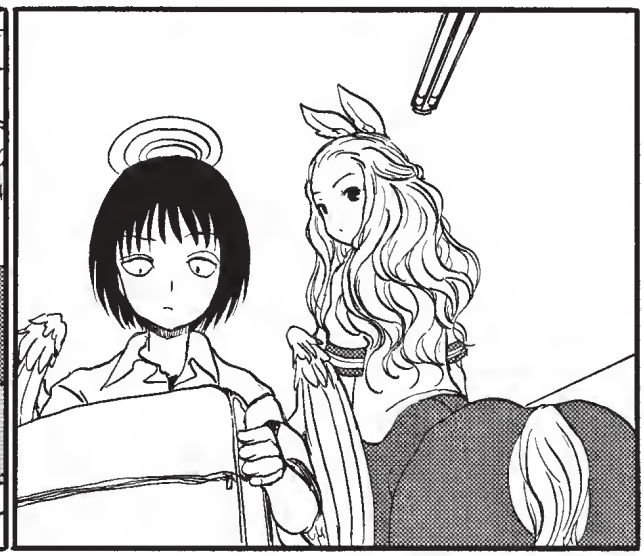

AND WHEN THAT DAY COMES, I'LL EXPECT YOU TO SPEAK TO ME WITH *RESPECT*-- NOT LIKE I'M A *CHILD*.
NEXT YEAR, I'LL BE A SHIN KANATA HIGH STUDENT, SAME AS YOU.
AYAKA, AREN'T YOU THE YOUNGER ONE?
HEY, WAIT A SEC.
SH-SHUT UP!
Aya-Aya, like, loves you.
SO, ISN'T IT *YOU* WHO SHOULD BE SPEAKING WITH RESPECT TO *HER*?


I MEAN, PERSONALLY, I'D BE FINE WITH AYA-AYA BEING A LESBIAN--
STOP TALKING NOW.
BUT THAT'S THE KIND OF THING THAT MAKES AYAKA SO CUTE.


I'M SORRY, TOO.
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.


I'M... SORRY ABOUT YESTERDAY.

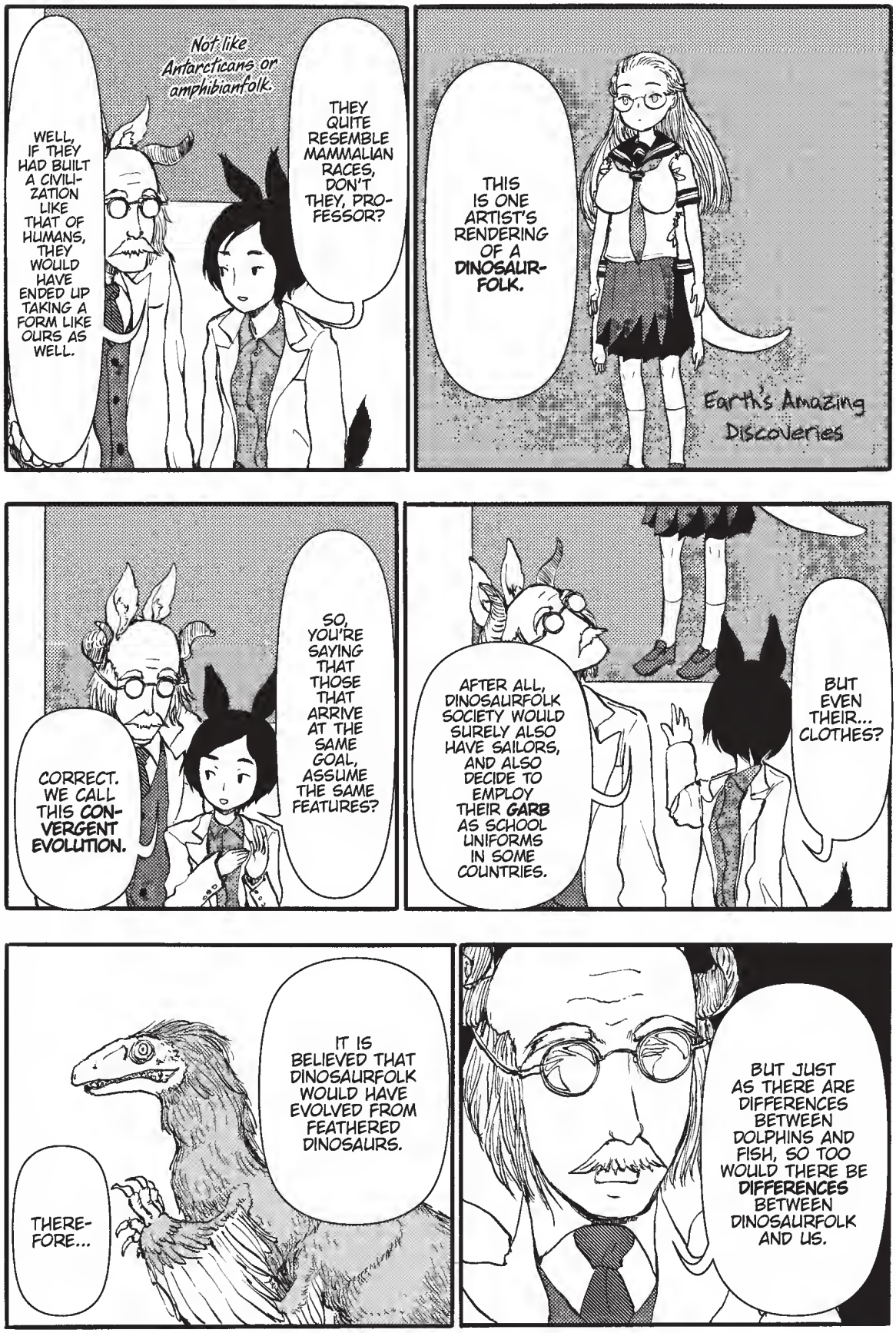
A RIVAL, HUH? SHE REALLY DOES HAVE IT ALL.



A CentaUr's Life

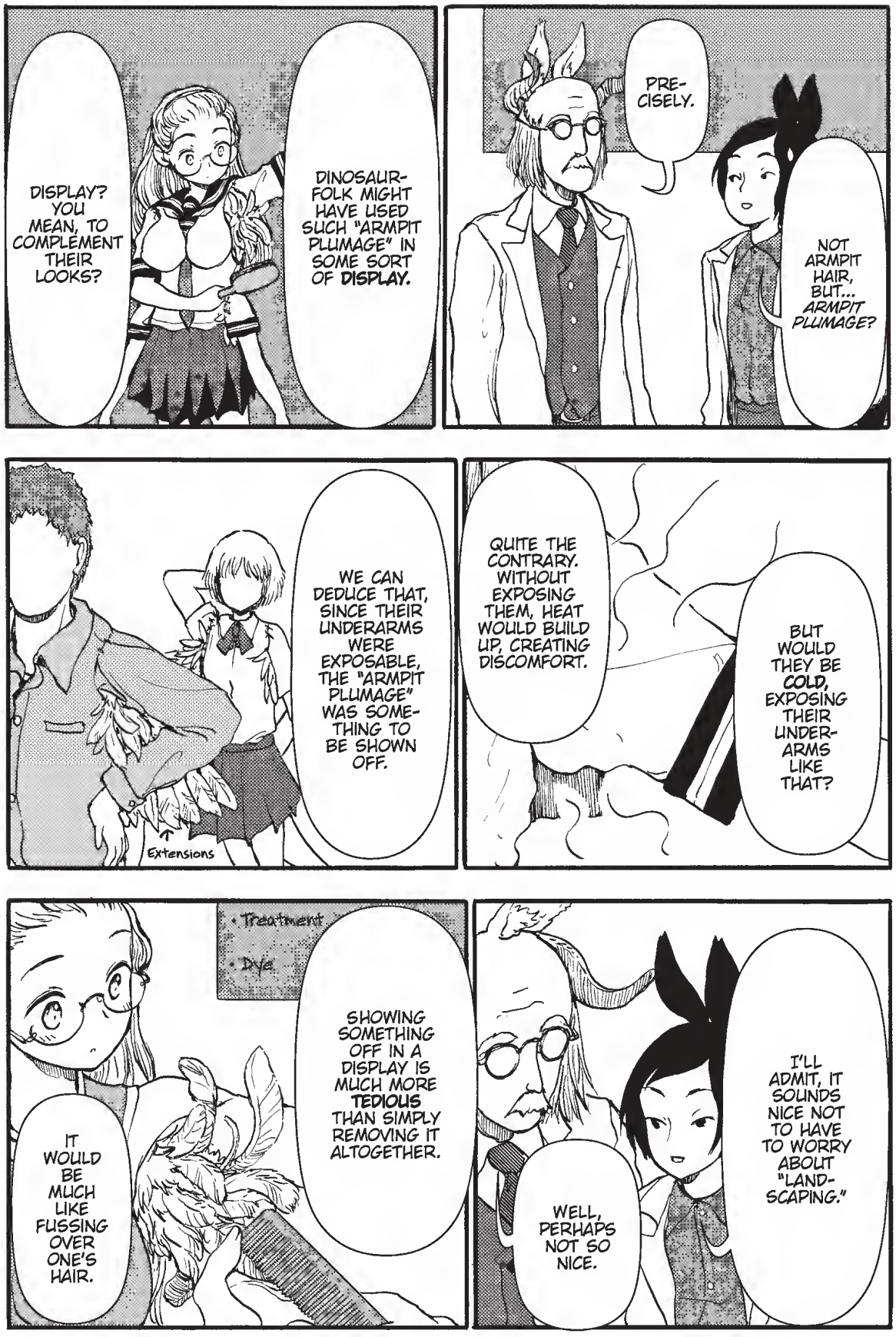
HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD:
HENSHIN MASK

THE ORIGINAL FANTASY HERO SERIES FOR CHILDREN, *HENSHIN MASK* WAS PRODUCED WITH AN UNTHINKABLY SMALL BUDGET BY MODERN STANDARDS. THE CENTRAL PREMISE INVOLVED A HERO WHO COULD TRANSFORM INTO OTHER PEOPLE, RACE AND ALL--A PREMISE BORN OUT OF THE STUDIO'S INABILITY TO SECURE A STEADY CAST, AS WELL AS SOME IDEAS BORROWED FROM A CERTAIN POPULAR DETECTIVE SERIES. IN EFFECT, THIS MEANT THAT THE SHOW HAD DIFFERENT ACTORS (OR, AT TIMES, AMATEUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE CREW) PORTRAYING THE HERO UNDER THE GUISE OF "TRANSFORMATION". THIS LED TO OVERWHELMING POPULARITY AMONGST CHILDREN, BUT ALSO HAD AN UNFORESEEN IMPACT WHICH WOULD LAST FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. IT BROUGHT FORTH THE NOTION THAT A HERO MUST TRANSCEND RACE.

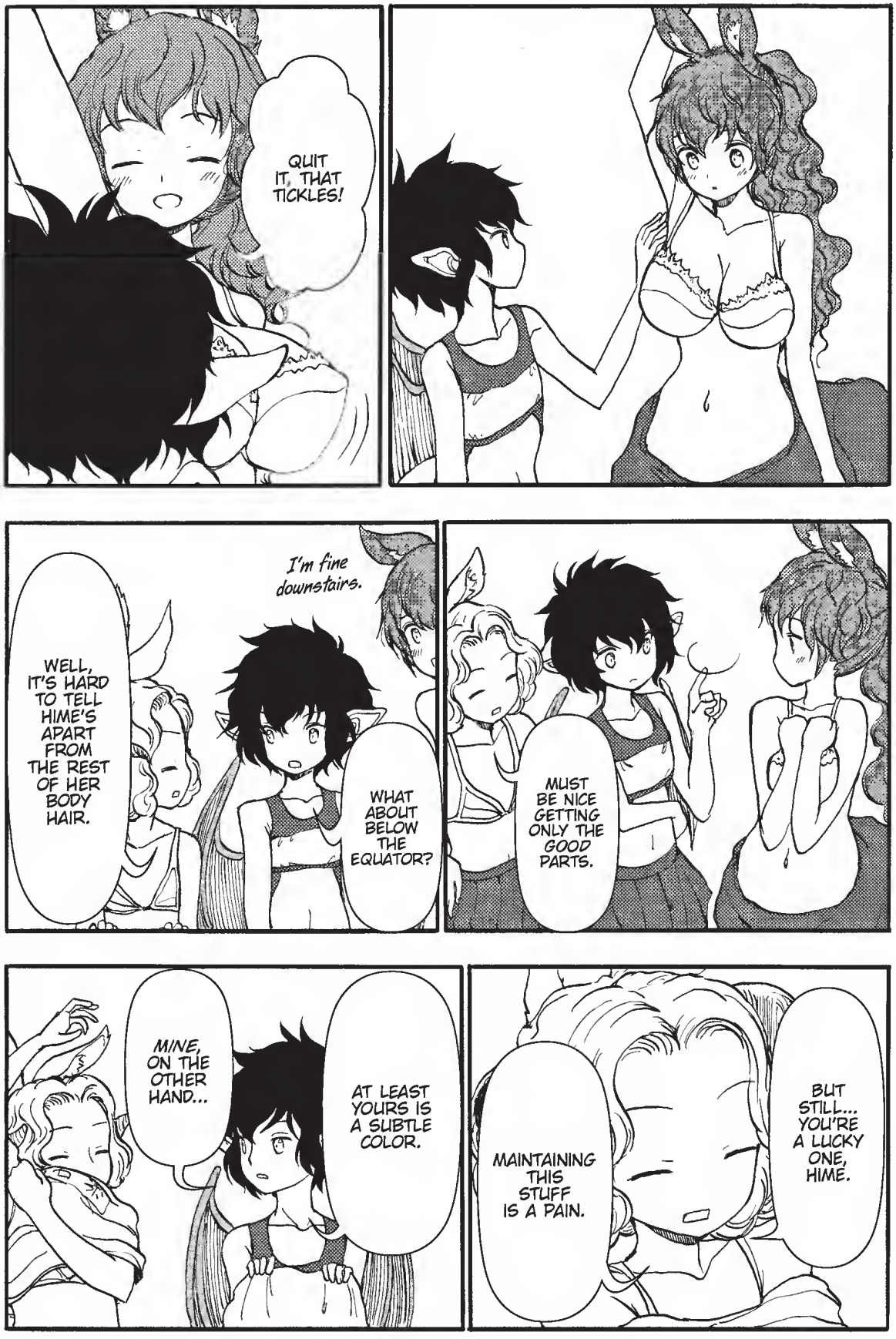

THEY QUITE RESEMBLE MAMMALIAN RACES, DON'T THEY, PROFESSOR?
Not like Antarcticans or amphibianfolk.
WELL, IF THEY HAD BUILT A CIVILIZATION LIKE THAT OF HUMANS, THEY WOULD HAVE ENDED UP TAKING A FORM LIKE OURS AS WELL.
THIS IS ONE ARTIST'S RENDERING OF A **DINOSAURFOLK.**
Earth's Amazing Discoveries
SO, YOU'RE SAYING THAT THOSE THAT ARRIVE AT THE SAME GOAL, ASSUME THE SAME FEATURES?
CORRECT. WE CALL THIS **CONVERGENT EVOLUTION.**
AFTER ALL, DINOSAURFOLK SOCIETY WOULD SURELY ALSO HAVE SAILORS, AND ALSO DECIDE TO EMPLOY THEIR **GARB** AS SCHOOL UNIFORMS IN SOME COUNTRIES.
BUT EVEN THEIR... CLOTHES?
IT IS BELIEVED THAT DINOSAURFOLK WOULD HAVE EVOLVED FROM FEATHERED DINOSAURS.
THEREFORE...
BUT JUST AS THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DOLPHINS AND FISH, SO TOO WOULD THERE BE **DIFFERENCES** BETWEEN DINOSAURFOLK AND US.

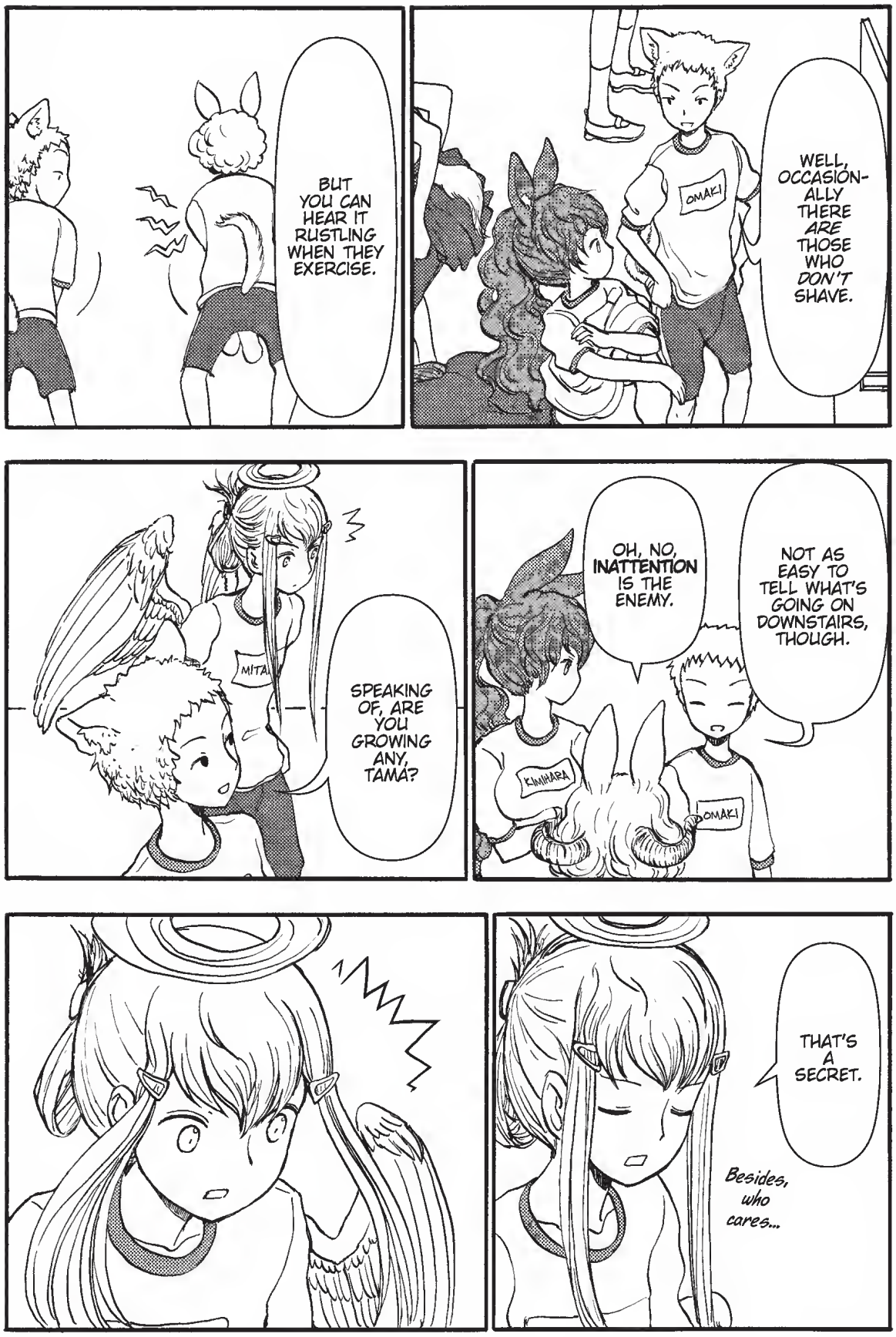
CHAPTER 54

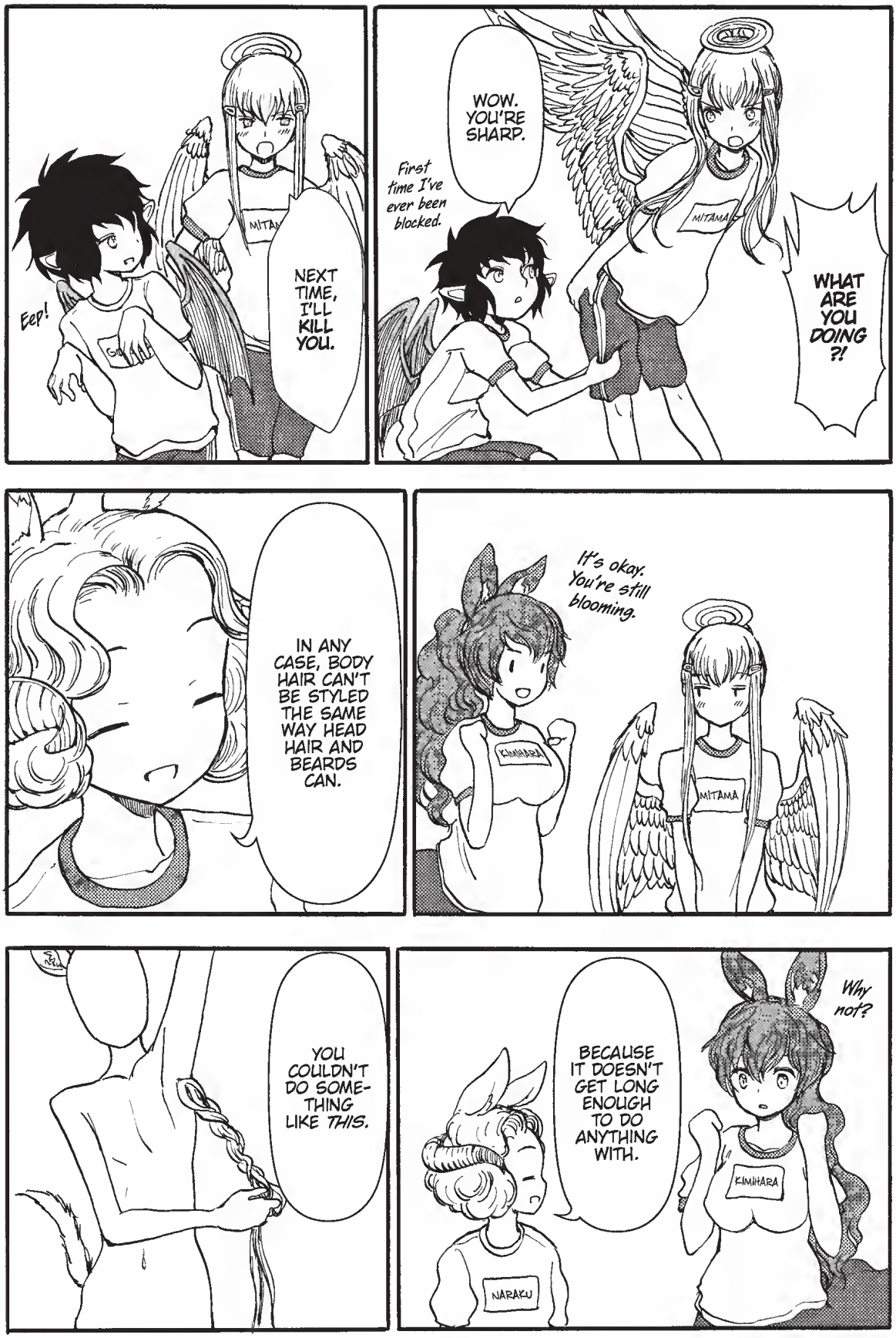
...IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THEY WOULD HAVE HAD FEATHERS SPROUTING FROM THEIR UNDERARMS.

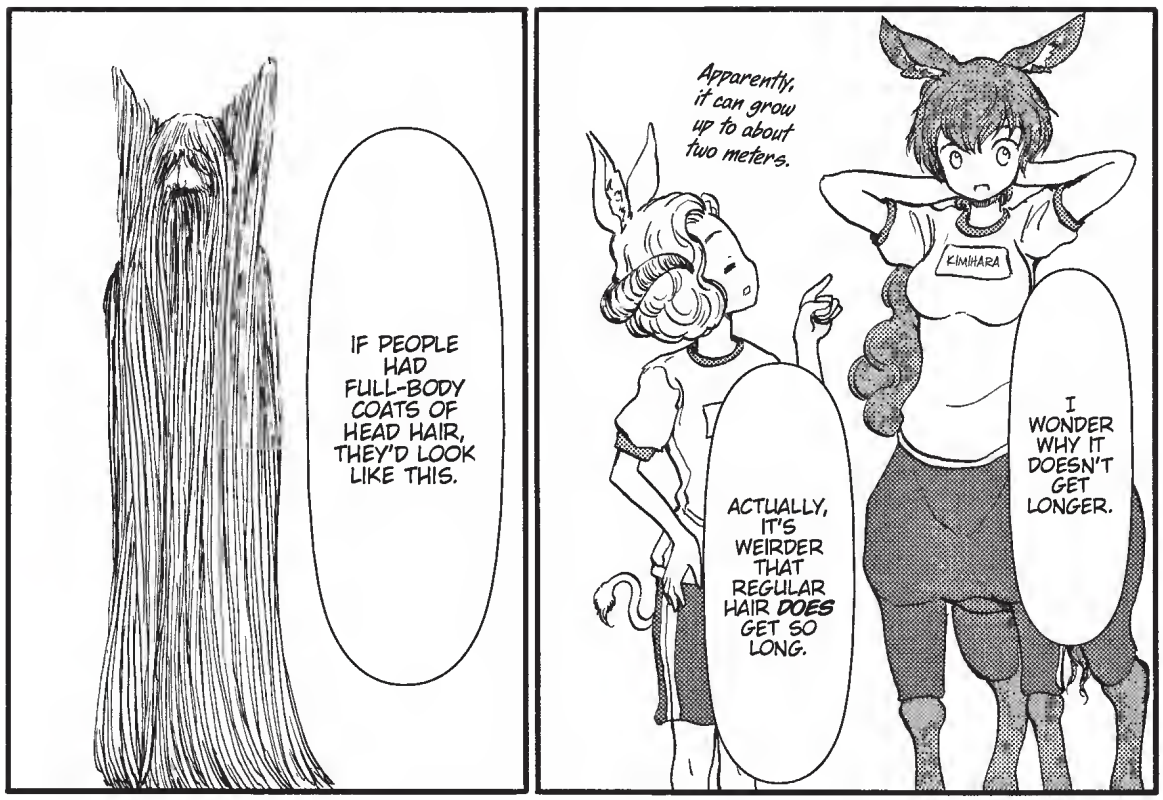

DISPLAY? YOU MEAN, TO COMPLEMENT THEIR LOOKS?
DINOSAUR-FOLK MIGHT HAVE USED SUCH "ARMPIT PLUMAGE" IN SOME SORT OF **DISPLAY.**
PRE-CISELY.
NOT ARMPIT HAIR, BUT... *ARMPIT PLUMAGE?*
WE CAN DEDUCE THAT, SINCE THEIR UNDERARMS WERE EXPOSABLE, THE "ARMPIT PLUMAGE" WAS SOME-THING TO BE SHOWN OFF.
Extensions
QUITE THE CONTRARY. WITHOUT EXPOSING THEM, HEAT WOULD BUILD UP, CREATING DISCOMFORT.
BUT WOULD THEY BE **COLD,** EXPOSING THEIR UNDER-ARMS LIKE THAT?
• Treatment
• Dye
IT WOULD BE MUCH LIKE FUSSING OVER ONE'S HAIR.
SHOWING SOMETHING OFF IN A DISPLAY IS MUCH MORE **TEDIOUS** THAN SIMPLY REMOVING IT ALTOGETHER.
WELL, PERHAPS NOT SO NICE.
I'LL ADMIT, IT SOUNDS NICE NOT TO HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT "LAND-SCAPING."

I THINK PEOPLE COULD DO THAT SAME SORT OF DISPLAY IN OUR SOCIETY.
THAT'S WHAT THE SHOW SAID, ANYWAY.
SO WHY AREN'T YA, HIME?
OH...
WHAT ?!
WELL, 'CAUSE... I'M NOT GROWING ANY.


QUIT IT, THAT TICKLES!
I'm fine downstairs.
WELL, IT'S HARD TO TELL HIME'S APART FROM THE REST OF HER BODY HAIR.
WHAT ABOUT BELOW THE EQUATOR?
MUST BE NICE GETTING ONLY THE GOOD PARTS.
MINE, ON THE OTHER HAND...
AT LEAST YOURS IS A SUBTLE COLOR.
MAINTAINING THIS STUFF IS A PAIN.
BUT STILL... YOU'RE A LUCKY ONE, HIME.

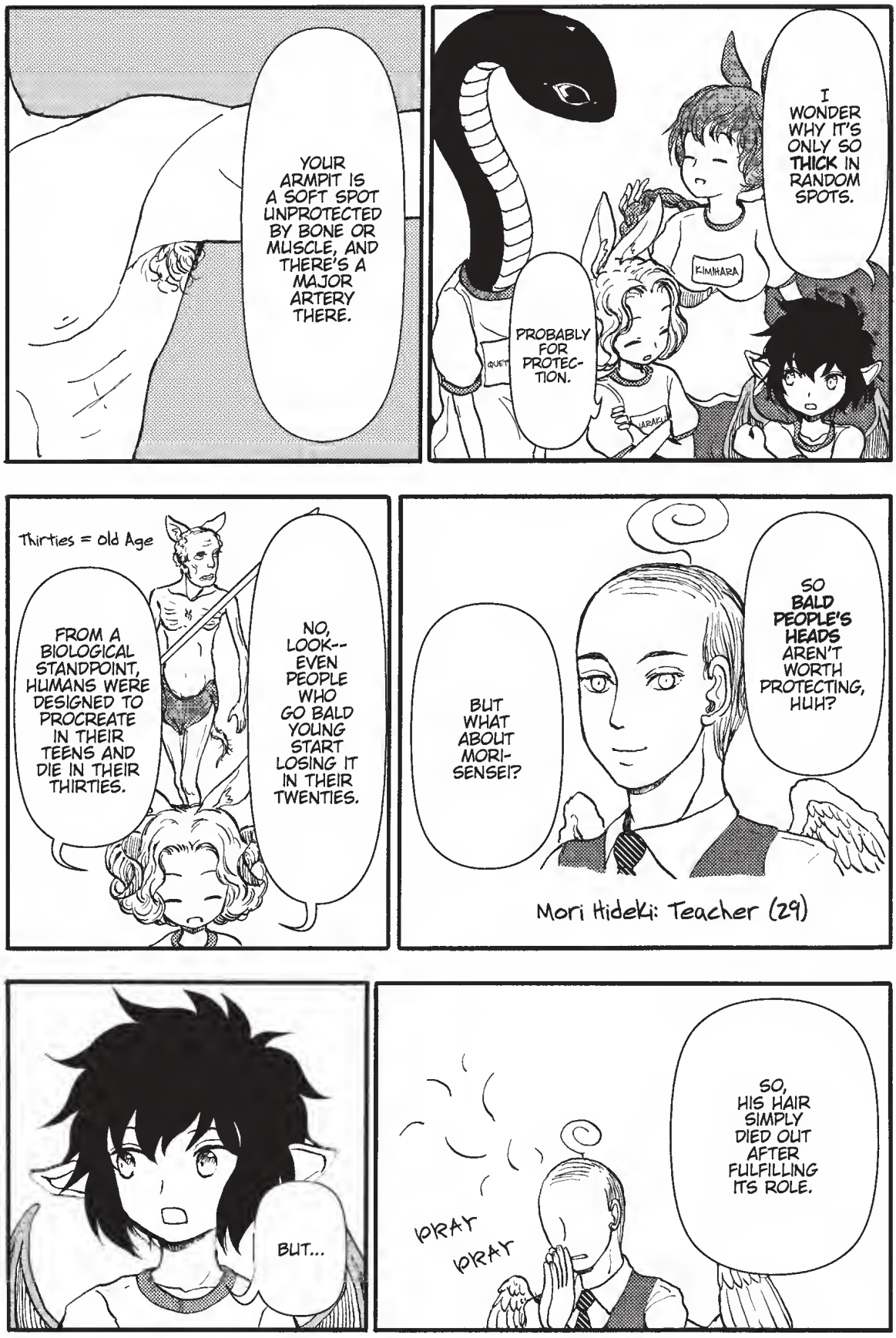

BUT YOU CAN HEAR IT RUSTLING WHEN THEY EXERCISE.
OMAKI
WELL, OCCASIONALLY THERE *ARE* THOSE WHO *DON'T* SHAVE.
MITA
SPEAKING OF, ARE YOU GROWING ANY, TAMA?
KINMIHARA
OMAKI
OH, NO, **INATTENTION** IS THE ENEMY.
NOT AS EASY TO TELL WHAT'S GOING ON DOWNSTAIRS, THOUGH.
THAT'S A SECRET.
Besides, who cares...

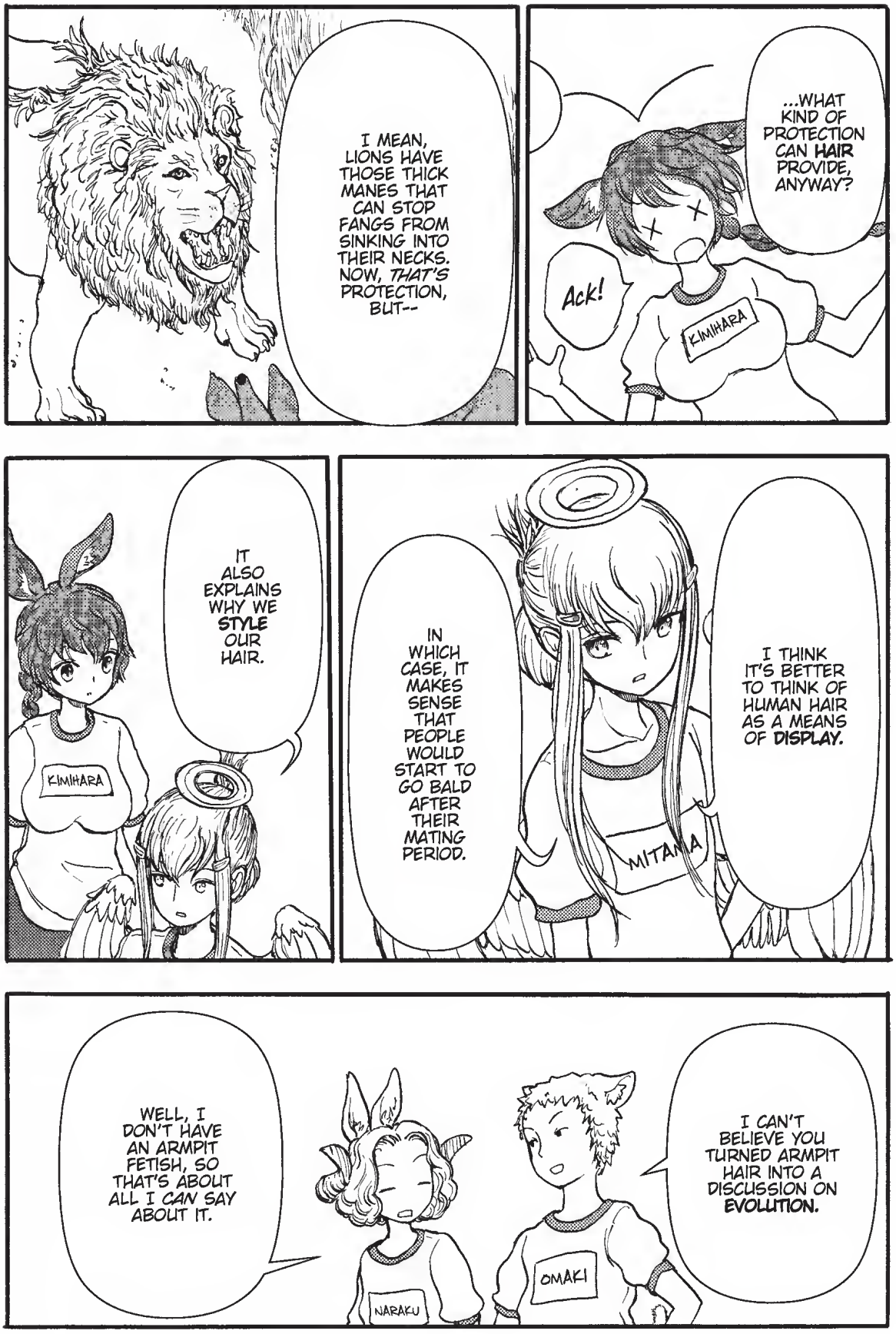

NEXT TIME, I'LL KILL YOU.
Eep!
WOW. YOU'RE SHARP.
First time I've ever been blocked.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?!
IN ANY CASE, BODY HAIR CAN'T BE STYLED THE SAME WAY HEAD HAIR AND BEARDS CAN.
It's okay. You're still blooming.
YOU COULDN'T DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
BECAUSE IT DOESN'T GET LONG ENOUGH TO DO ANYTHING WITH.
Why not?
NARAKU
KIMIHARA
MITAMA

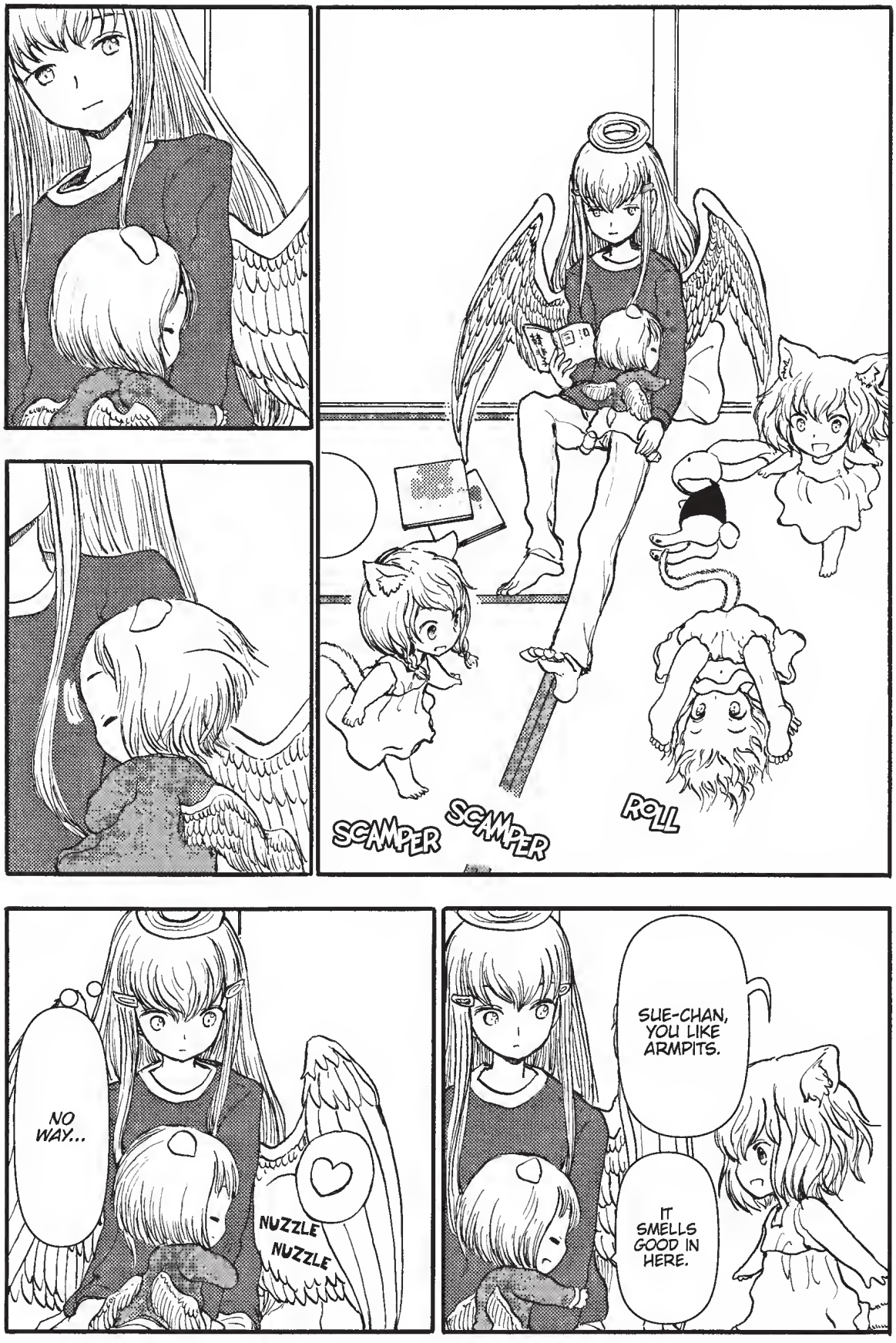

IF PEOPLE HAD FULL-BODY COATS OF HEAD HAIR, THEY'D LOOK LIKE THIS.
Apparently, it can grow up to about two meters.
ACTUALLY, IT'S WEIRDER THAT REGULAR HAIR DOES GET SO LONG.
I WONDER WHY IT DOESN'T GET LONGER.
KIMIHARA

SPEAKING OF, BASED ON RESTORATIONS, APPARENTLY CAVEMEN'S BODY HAIR GREW IN ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT WAYS.

Originally naked.
ANGELFOLK'S WINGS WERE AN ADAPTATION TO THE GLOBAL COOLING THAT FOLLOWED.
Muscle mass also decreased, reducing weight.
We became better runners.
EVEN AFTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF SWEAT GLANDS, EVOLUTION CONTINUED TO PRIORITIZE THE ABILITY TO **EXPEL HEAT** DURING PROLONGED EXERCISE, SO BODY HAIR KEPT GETTING THINNER AND THINNER, I THINK.
EVEN OTHER SPECIES ADAPT TO HARSH HEAT. LARGE ANIMALS IN THE TROPICS HAVE LITTLE TO NO HAIR.
KIMIHARA
IT'S REALLY MORE PUZZLING THAT **OUR** HAIR GETS SO LONG.


YOUR ARMPIT IS A SOFT SPOT UNPROTECTED BY BONE OR MUSCLE, AND THERE'S A MAJOR ARTERY THERE.
I WONDER WHY IT'S ONLY SO THICK IN RANDOM SPOTS.
KIMIHARA
PROBABLY FOR PROTEC-TION.
Thirties = old Age
FROM A BIOLOGICAL STANDPOINT, HUMANS WERE DESIGNED TO PROCREATE IN THEIR TEENS AND DIE IN THEIR THIRTIES.
NO, LOOK-- EVEN PEOPLE WHO GO BALD YOUNG START LOSING IT IN THEIR TWENTIES.
BUT WHAT ABOUT MORI-SENSEI?
SO BALD PEOPLE'S HEADS AREN'T WORTH PROTECTING, HUH?
Mori Hideki: Teacher (29)
BUT...
SO, HIS HAIR SIMPLY DIED OUT AFTER FULFILLING ITS ROLE.
PRAY
PRAY

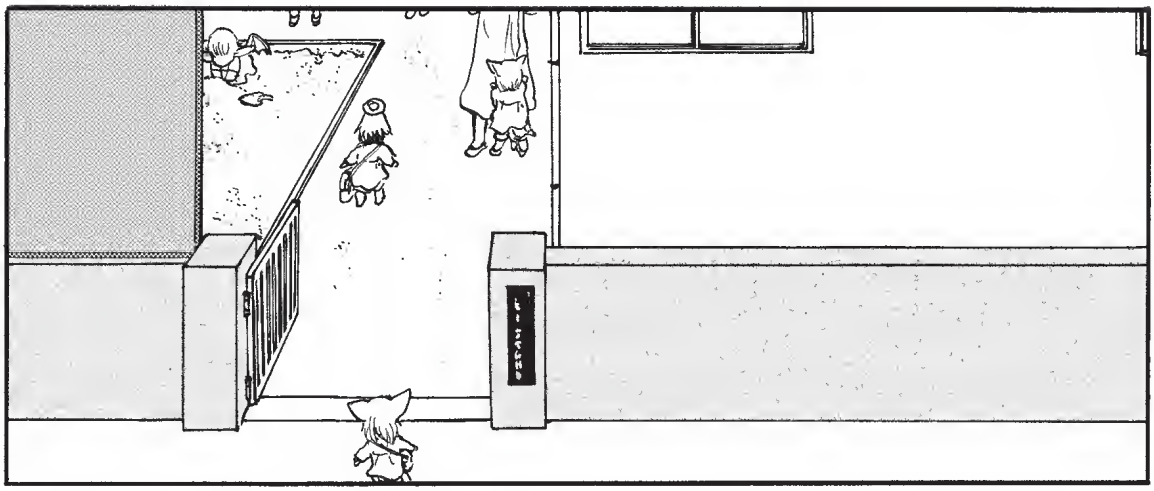

I MEAN, LIONS HAVE THOSE THICK MANES THAT CAN STOP FANGS FROM SINKING INTO THEIR NECKS. NOW, *THAT'S* PROTECTION, BUT--
...WHAT KIND OF PROTECTION CAN **HAIR** PROVIDE, ANYWAY?
Ack!
KIMIHARA
IT ALSO EXPLAINS WHY WE **STYLE** OUR HAIR.
KIMIHARA
IN WHICH CASE, IT MAKES SENSE THAT PEOPLE WOULD START TO GO BALD AFTER THEIR MATING PERIOD.
I THINK IT'S BETTER TO THINK OF HUMAN HAIR AS A MEANS OF **DISPLAY.**
MITAKA
WELL, I DON'T HAVE AN ARMPIT FETISH, SO THAT'S ABOUT ALL I *CAN* SAY ABOUT IT.
NARAKU
OMAKI
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TURNED ARMPIT HAIR INTO A DISCUSSION ON **EVOLUTION.**


SCAMPER
SCAMPER
ROLL
NO WAY...
NUZZLE
NUZZLE
SUE-CHAN, YOU LIKE ARMPITS.
IT SMELLS GOOD IN HERE.

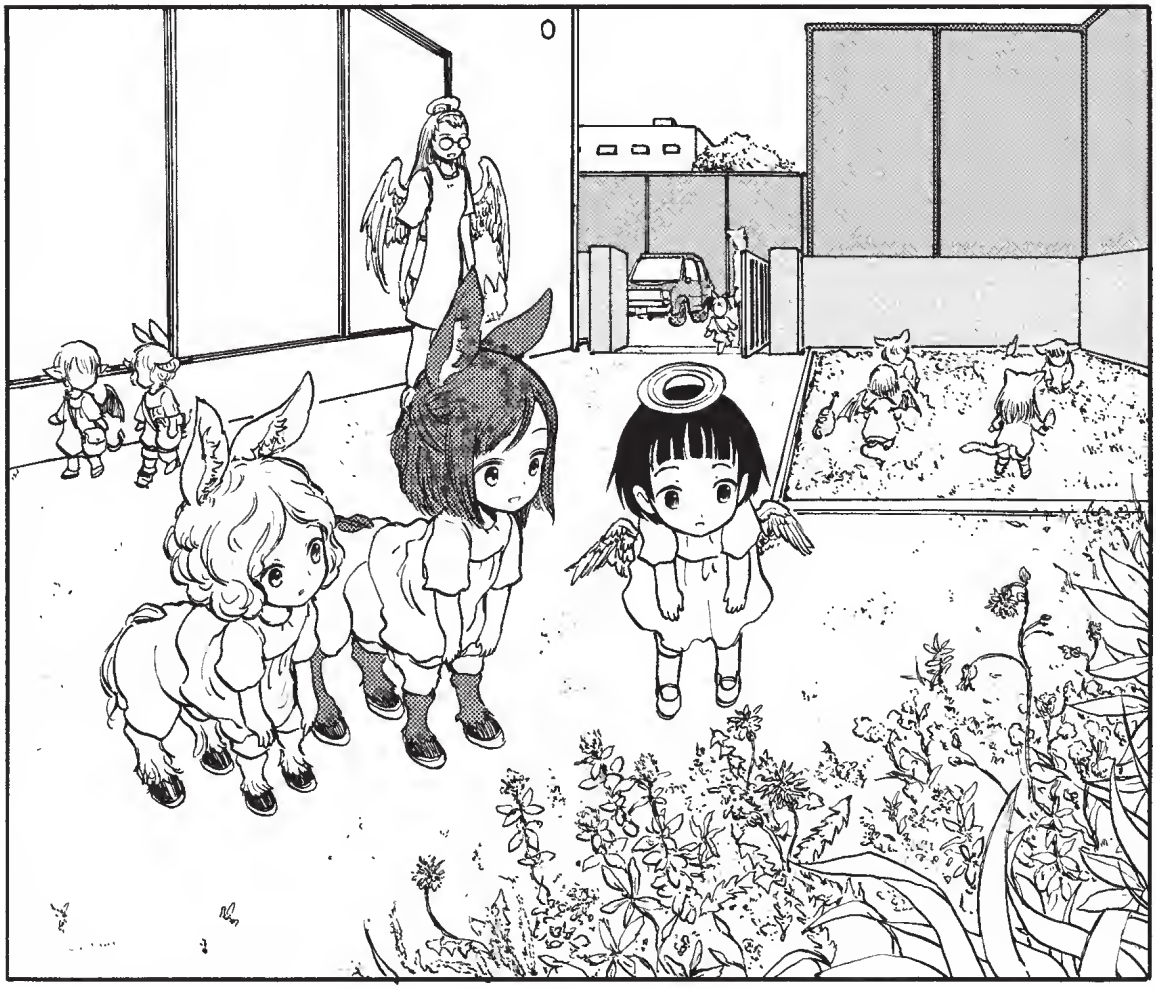
A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD:
HOLY BIRD OF PREY DOFALCON

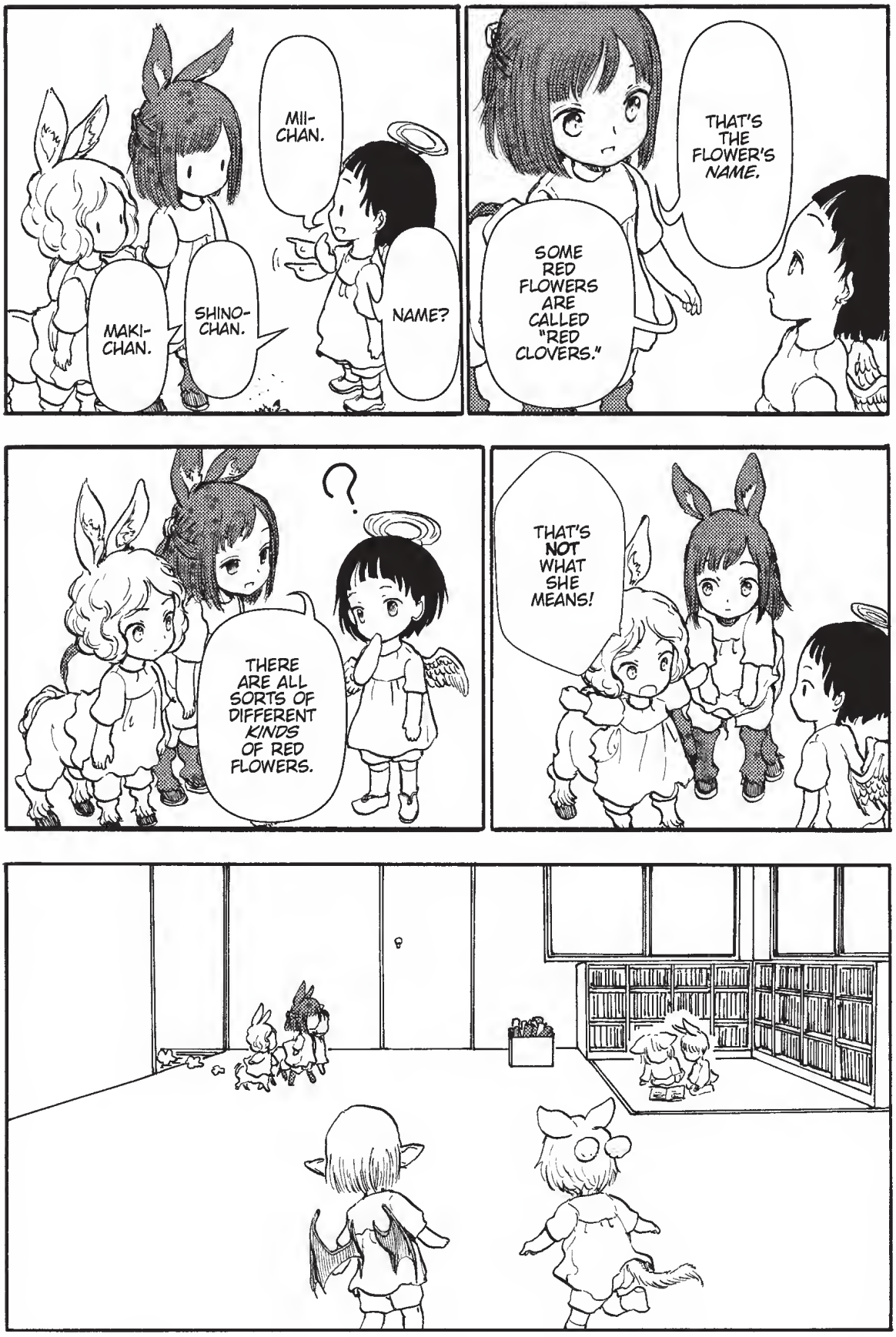
A TV ACTION HERO SERIES FROM THE CREATOR OF *HENSHIN MASK*. RELATIVE TO ITS PREDECESSOR, THE SERIES BUDGET SEEMED A SMALL FORTUNE (OF COURSE, IT WAS STILL A WAYS OFF FROM AN *ACTUAL* FORTUNE), BUT CONTROVERSY DEVELOPED AROUND THE FIXED RACE OF THE PROTAGONIST AND ANTAGONIST--THE FORMER CLEARLY AN ANGELFOLK, THE LATTER CLEARLY A CENTAUR (ALBEIT MOSTLY HIDDEN UNDER A CLOAK). THIS RAISED ALLEGATIONS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, TO WHICH THE NETWORK RESPONDED THAT THE PROTAGONIST WAS NOT AN ANGELFOLK, BUT A PERSONIFIED BIRD. THEY ALSO CHANGED THE LOOK OF THE VILLAIN TO MAKE HIS RACE MORE AMBIGUOUS. WHILE THE SHOW CONTINUED TO RECEIVE CRITICISM FROM SOME MEMBERS OF THE CULTURAL ELITE, IT MANAGED TO AVOID ANY LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS AND WAS ABLE TO SEE OUT ITS PLANNED NUMBER OF EPISODES, BUT THE STRINGS ATTACHED HAD BECOME CLEAR TO SEE.



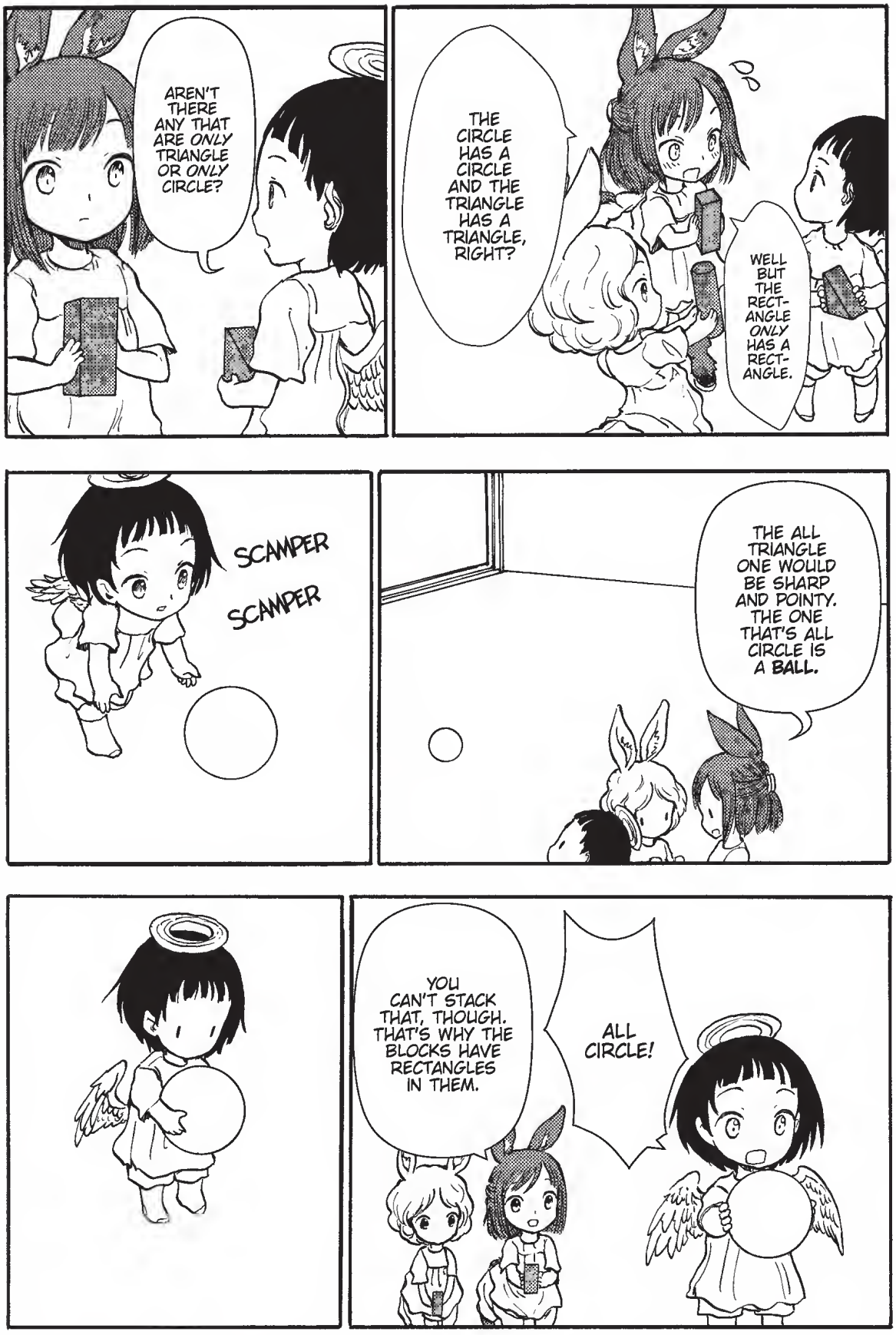
CHAPTER 55

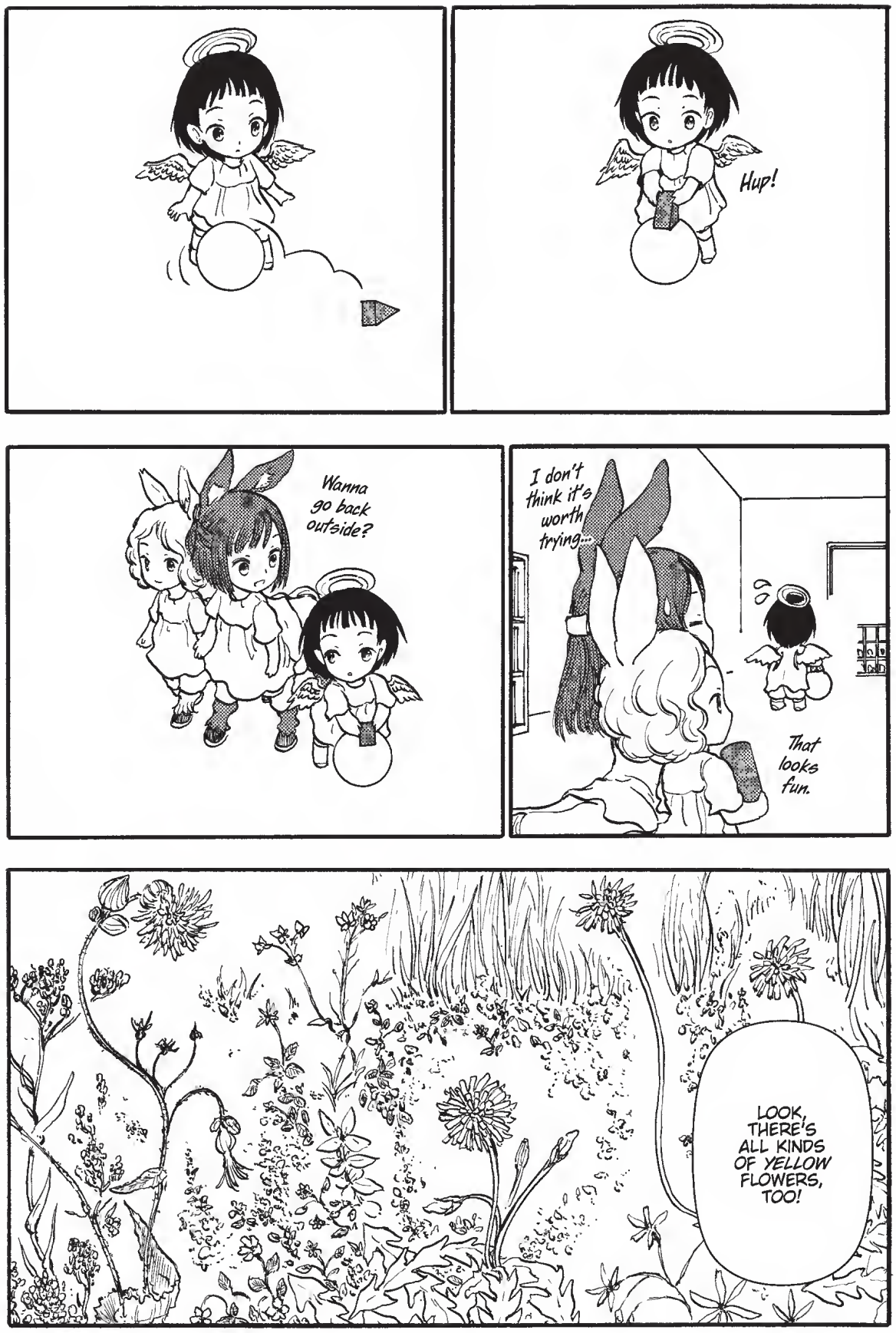


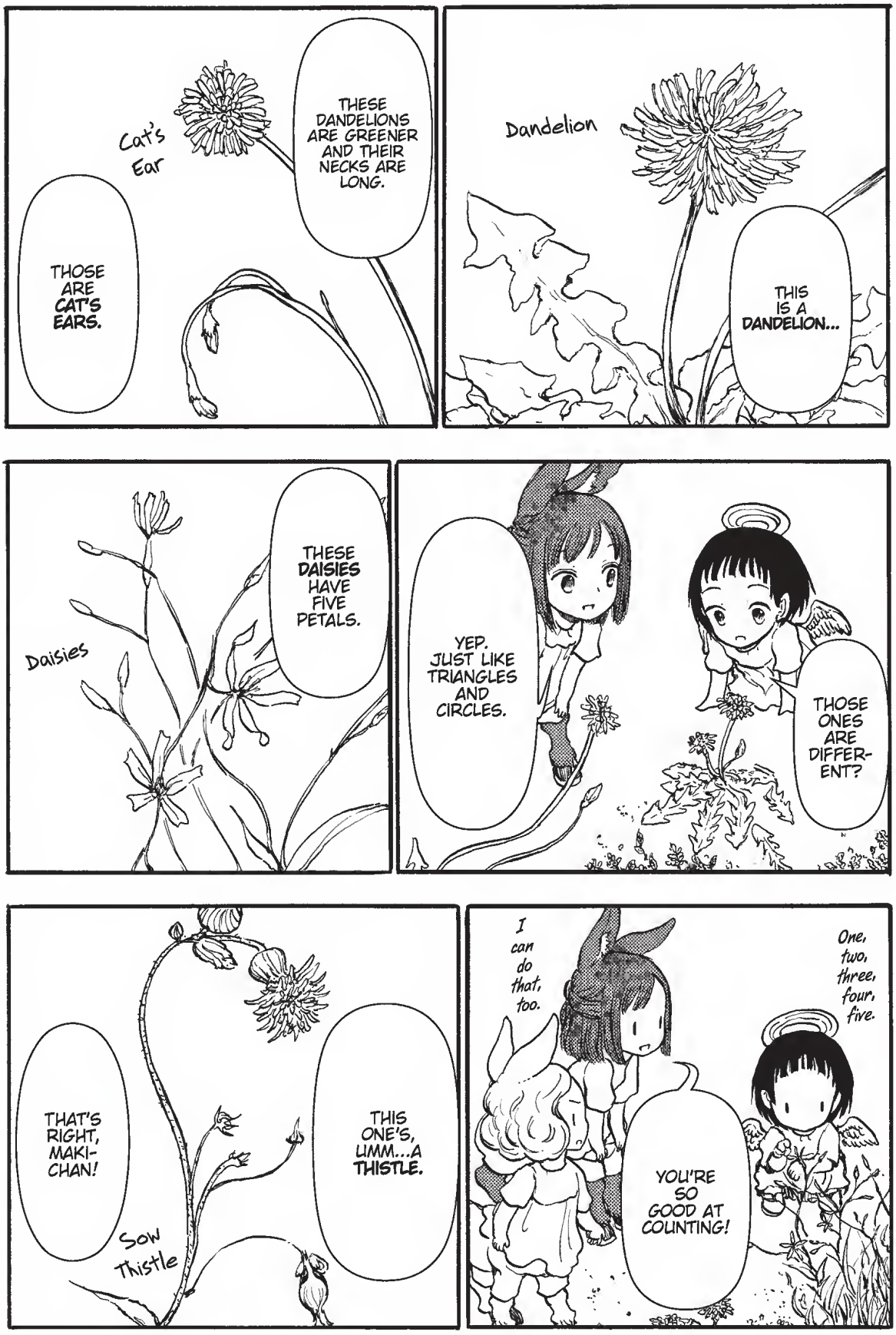
THE RED FLOWER.
IT'S A CLOVER.
Red Clover
WHAT ABOUT THIS FLOWER?
THIS ONE IS CALLED A RED CLOVER!
IT'S NOT A RED FLOWER?
GOOD JOB REMEM-BERING THAT!


MII-CHAN.
NAME?
SHINO-CHAN.
MAKI-CHAN.
THAT'S THE FLOWER'S *NAME.*
SOME RED FLOWERS ARE CALLED "RED CLOVERS."
?
THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT *KINDS* OF RED FLOWERS.
THAT'S **NOT** WHAT SHE MEANS!

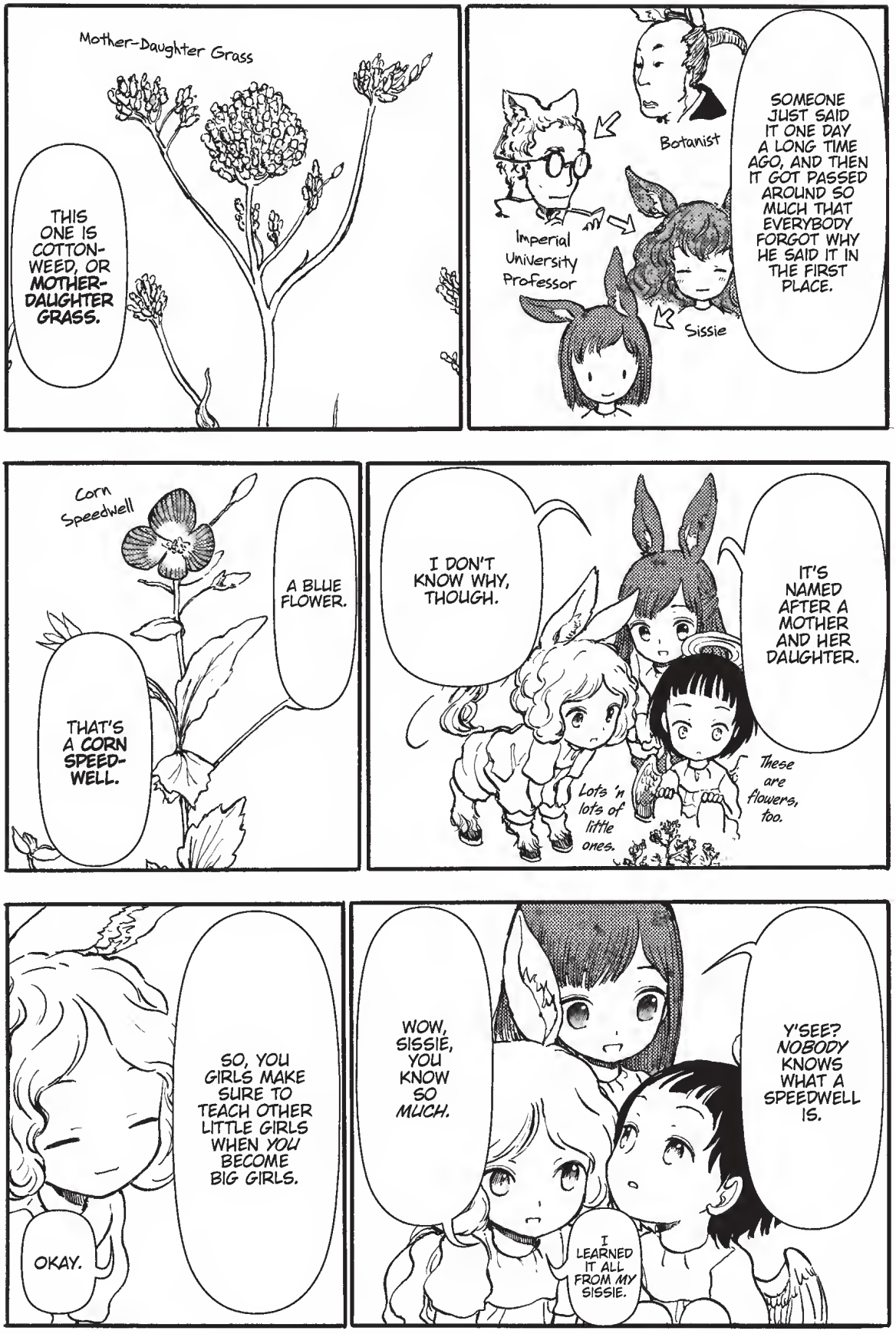
THIS ONE'S A TRI-ANGLE!
YOU GOT IT. THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF SHAPES.
EVEN WITH BLOCKS, THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF DIFFERENT ONES, LIKE TRIANGLES AND RECTANGLES, RIGHT?
IT'S A CIRCLE!
THAT'S RIGHT! AND JUST LIKE BLOCKS, FLOWERS HAVE ALL DIFFERENT TYPES, AND THEY ALL HAVE DIFFERENT NAMES.
BUT THE TRI-ANGLE HAS A RECT-ANGLE IN IT, TOO.
THE CIRCLE HAS A RECTANGLE IN IT, TOO.

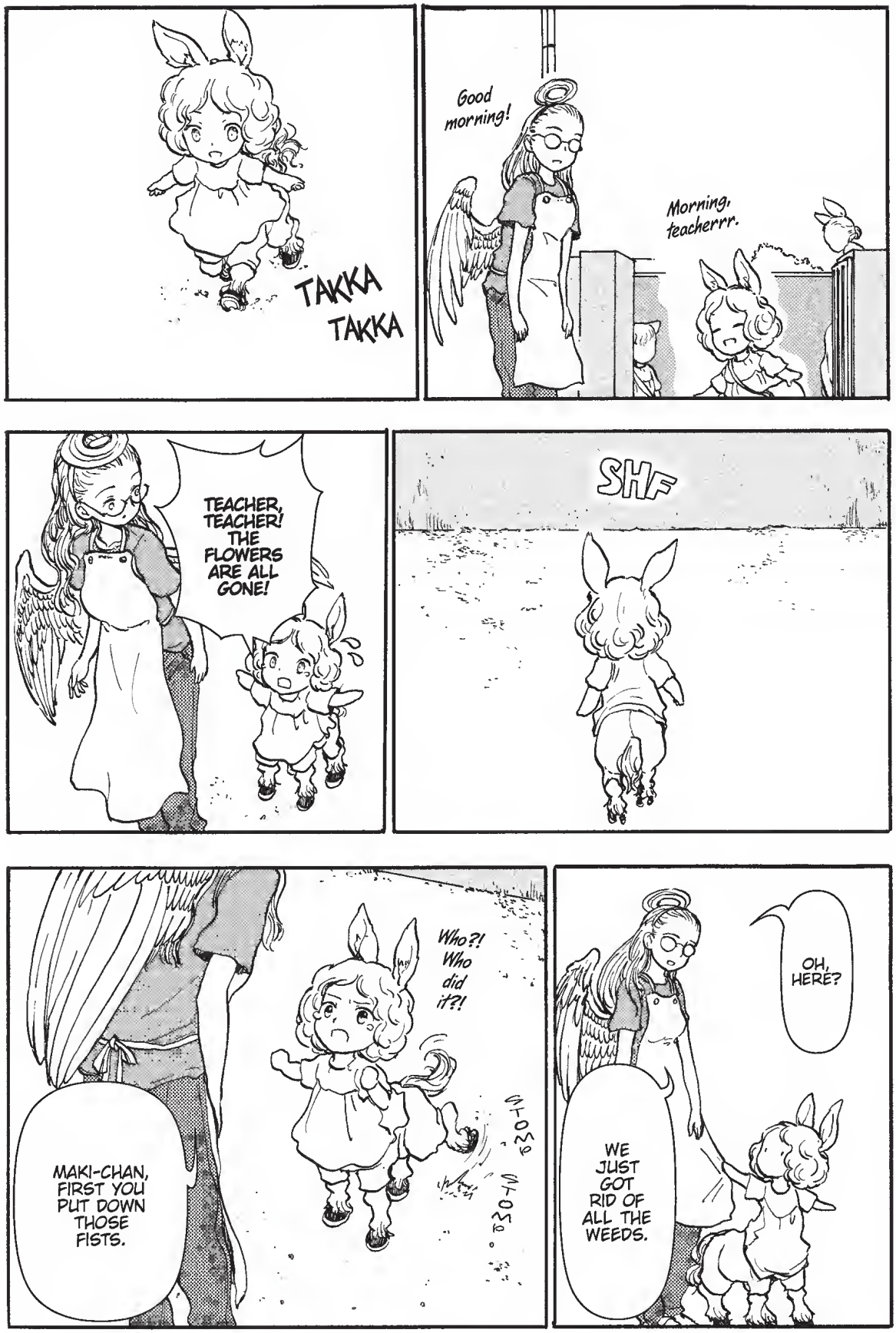

AREN'T THERE ANY THAT ARE *ONLY* TRIANGLE OR *ONLY* CIRCLE?
THE CIRCLE HAS A CIRCLE AND THE TRIANGLE HAS A TRIANGLE, RIGHT?
WELL BUT THE RECT-ANGLE *ONLY* HAS A RECT-ANGLE.
SCAMPER
SCAMPER
THE ALL TRIANGLE ONE WOULD BE SHARP AND POINTY. THE ONE THAT'S ALL CIRCLE IS A **BALL.**
YOU CAN'T STACK THAT, THOUGH. THAT'S WHY THE BLOCKS HAVE RECTANGLES IN THEM.
ALL CIRCLE!

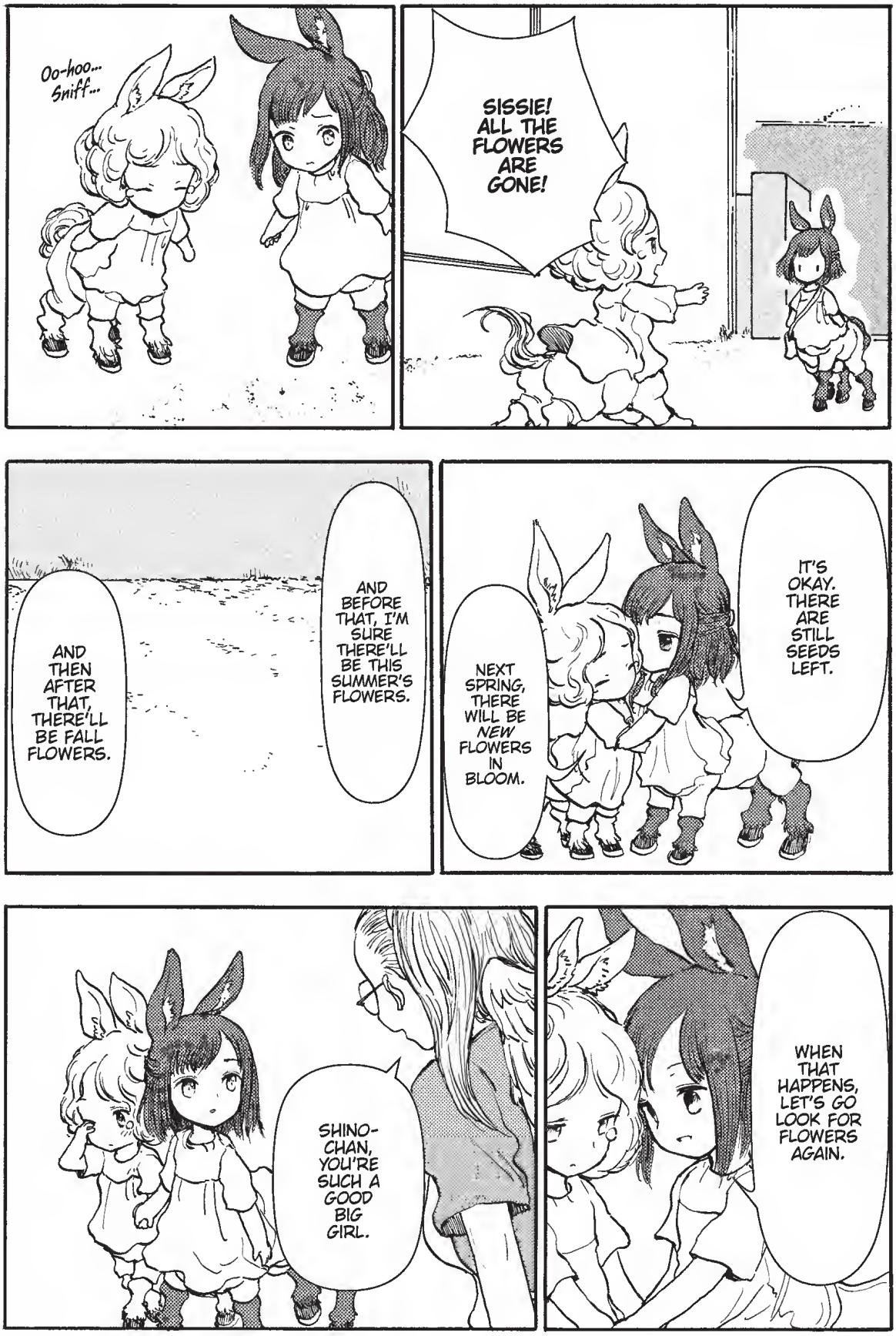

Hup!
Wanna go back outside?
I don't think it's worth trying...
That looks fun.
LOOK, THERE'S ALL KINDS OF YELLOW FLOWERS, TOO!


Cat's Ear
THESE DANDELIONS ARE GREENER AND THEIR NECKS ARE LONG.
THOSE ARE CAT'S EARS.
Dandelion
THIS IS A DANDELION...
Daisies
THESE DAISIES HAVE FIVE PETALS.
YEP. JUST LIKE TRIANGLES AND CIRCLES.
THOSE ONES ARE DIFFER-ENT?
Sow Thistle
THAT'S RIGHT, MAKI-CHAN!
THIS ONE'S, UMM...A THISTLE.
I can do that, too.
One, two, three, four, five.
YOU'RE SO GOOD AT COUNTING!

THESE ONES ARE "RICE GRAIN" TREFOILS. IF YOU LOOK REAL CLOSE, THERE'S A BUNCH OF FLOWERS THAT LOOK LIKE RICE GRAINS.
Rice Grain Trefoils
EVEN LITTLE TINY FLOWERS HAVE THEIR OWN NAMES.
Snake Strawberries
AND THESE ARE SNAKE STRAW-BERRIES.
They're smaller than rice.
WHY NOT?
SOMETIMES I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY HAVE THE NAMES THEY HAVE.
SNAKE STRAW-BERRIES?


Mother-Daughter Grass
THIS ONE IS COTTON-WEED, OR MOTHER-DAUGHTER GRASS.
Botanist
Imperial University Professor
Sissie
SOMEONE JUST SAID IT ONE DAY A LONG TIME AGO, AND THEN IT GOT PASSED AROUND SO MUCH THAT EVERYBODY FORGOT WHY HE SAID IT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
Corn Speedwell
A BLUE FLOWER.
THAT'S A CORN SPEED-WELL.
I DON'T KNOW WHY, THOUGH.
IT'S NAMED AFTER A MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER.
Lots 'n lots of little ones.
These are flowers, too.
SO, YOU GIRLS MAKE SURE TO TEACH OTHER LITTLE GIRLS WHEN YOU BECOME BIG GIRLS.
OKAY.
WOW, SISSIE, YOU KNOW SO MUCH.
I LEARNED IT ALL FROM MY SISSIE.
Y'SEE? NOBODY KNOWS WHAT A SPEEDWELL IS.


TAKKA
TAKKA
Good morning!
Morning, teacherrr.
TEACHER, TEACHER! THE FLOWERS ARE ALL GONE!
SHF
OH, HERE?
WE JUST GOT RID OF ALL THE WEEDS.
Who?! Who did it?!
STOMP STOMP
MAKI-CHAN, FIRST YOU PUT DOWN THOSE FISTS.

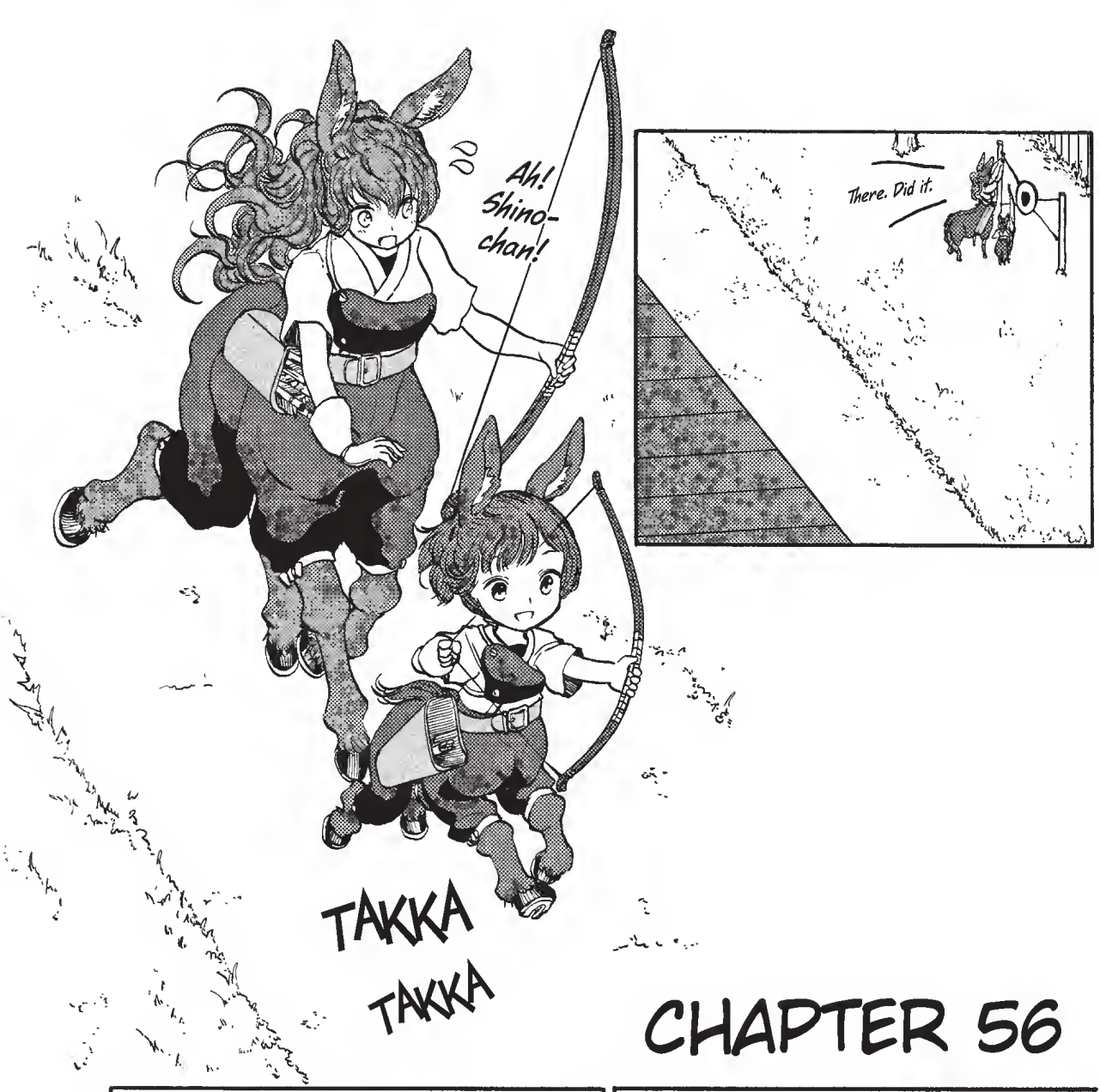

Oo-hoo... Sniff...
SISSIE! ALL THE FLOWERS ARE GONE!
IT'S OKAY. THERE ARE STILL SEEDS LEFT.
NEXT SPRING, THERE WILL BE NEW FLOWERS IN BLOOM.
AND BEFORE THAT, I'M SURE THERE'LL BE THIS SUMMER'S FLOWERS.
AND THEN AFTER THAT, THERE'LL BE FALL FLOWERS.
WHEN THAT HAPPENS, LET'S GO LOOK FOR FLOWERS AGAIN.
SHINO-CHAN, YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD BIG GIRL.

THAT'S OKAY. IT'S A GROWN-UP THING, RIGHT? I WANNA HURRY UP AND BECOME A GROWN-UP, TOO.
YOU SAW US LOOKING AT THE FLOWERS YESTERDAY, DIDN'T YOU?
YES, WELL, ER, BUT IT COULDN'T BE HELPED...
Wah-choo.
THESE POINTY ONES ARE CALLED CONES.
IF THE BASE IS A RECTANGLE, IT'S A RECT-ANGULAR PYRAMID.
IF IT'S A TRIANGLE ON ALL SIDES, IT'S A TRIANGULAR PYRAMID.
BUT IF THE BASE IS A CIRCLE, IT'S JUST A CONE.
FLIP
FLAP
IF IT'S LONG AND THE SAME THICK-NESS ALL THE WAY, IT'S A PRISM.
THERE'RE CYLINDRICAL PRISMS...
...AND TRIANGU-LAR PRISMS.
I THINK THAT'S ABOUT IT.
IT'S HARD TO BE A BIG GIRL. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT THOSE LITTLE GIRLS ARE GONNA ASK YOU.
I GUESS I HAVE TO STUDY IF I WANT TO BE A REAL BIG GIRL.
OH, BUT THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS EVEN I DON'T KNOW...

A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD:
EL TIGRE'S ROAR

A COMBINATION PERIOD PIECE AND ACTION HERO ROMP. NOT ONLY THE PROTAGONIST, BUT THE ENTIRE CAST OF CHARACTERS DONNED ANIMAL MASKS AND PORTRAYED ANIMALS, ALLOWING THE FILM TO AVOID PINNING ANY ONE RACE AS GOOD OR EVIL. AS A DRAMA, THE FILM REMAINED FAITHFUL TO THE ACTION HERO GENRE WHILE STILL MANAGING TO AVOID SIMPLE, ONE-DIMENSIONAL VILLAINS, AND THE FILM'S LIKABLE CAST OF CHARACTERS EARNED IT A POSITIVE RECEPTION. HOWEVER, THE USE OF MASKS EVEN FOR BACK-GROUND EXTRAS TOOK A SIGNIFICANT TOLL ON THE CREATOR'S ALREADY STRAINED FINANCIAL SITUATION. THE POSITIVE RECEPTION ALSO PROVED TO BE A HALF-HEARTED ONE, CREATING PRESSURE FOR A SEQUEL (PRODUCTION OF A SEQUEL WAS ALSO REQUIRED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE FILM'S OPERATING INCOME FROM THE BANK), WHICH WOULD ULTIMATELY PROVE TRAGIC.



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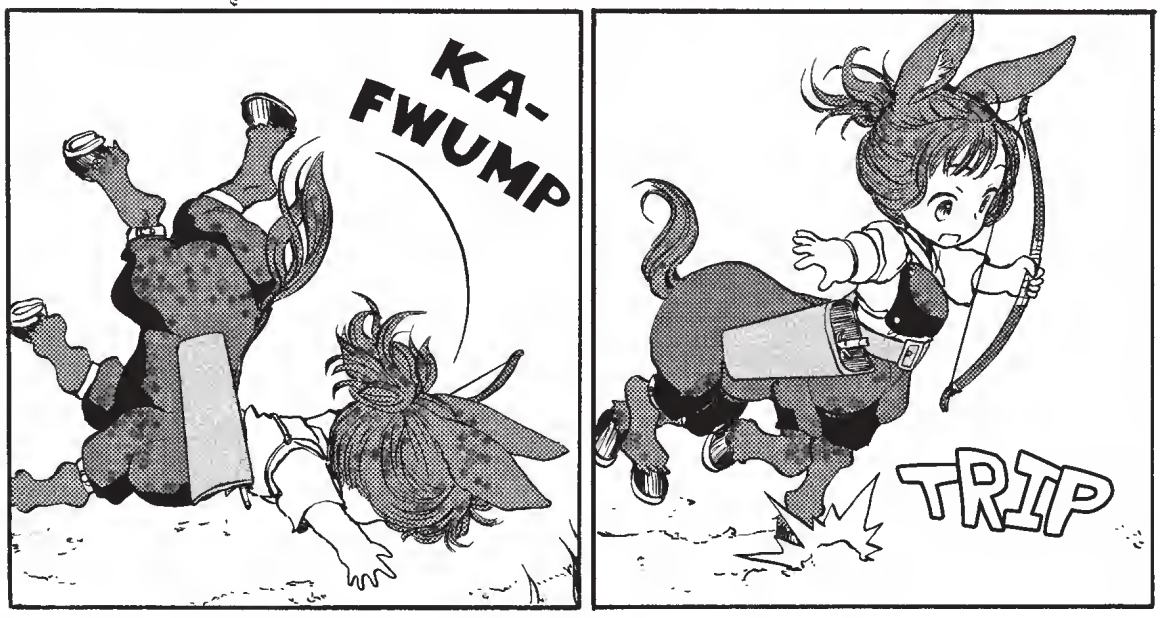
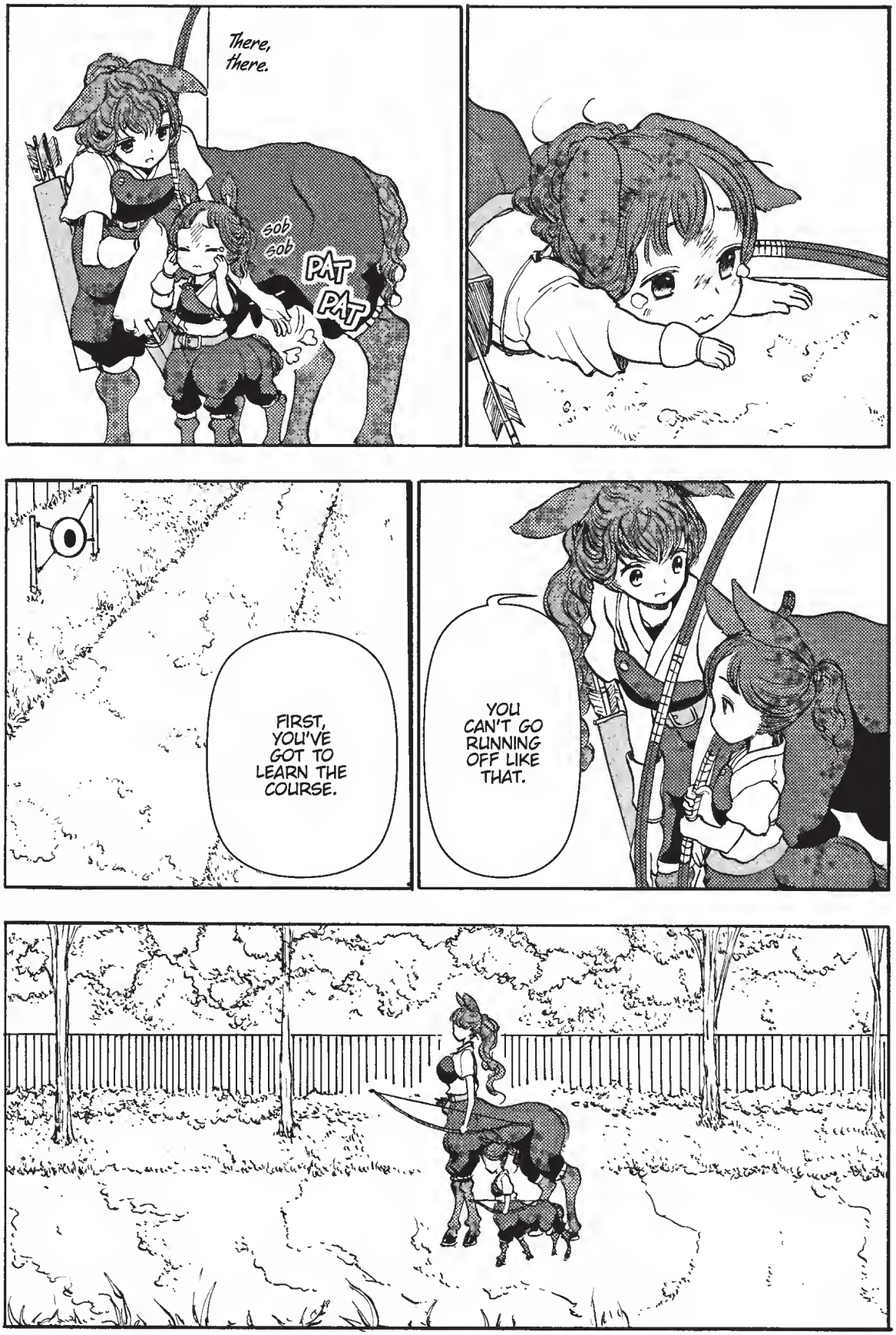
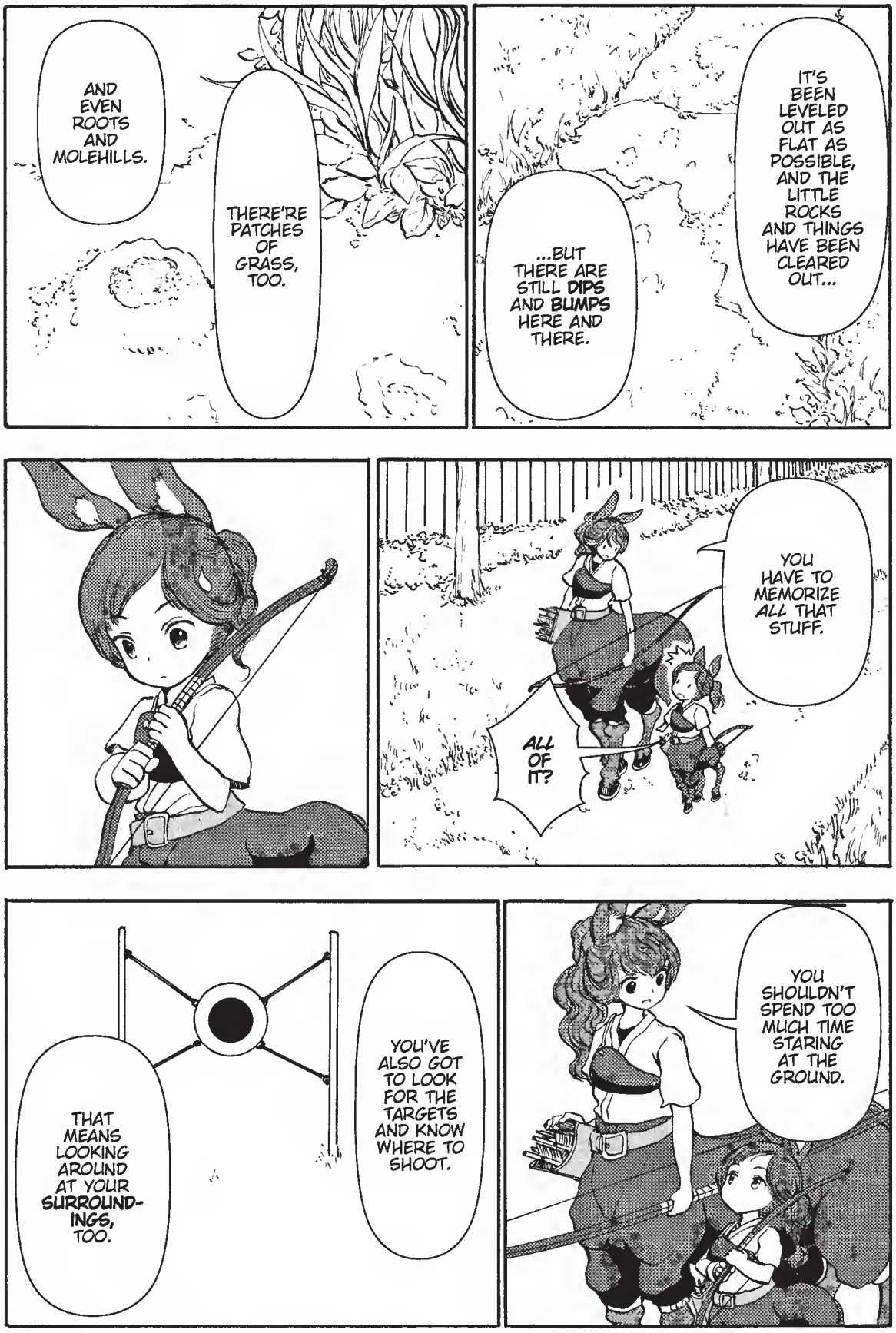
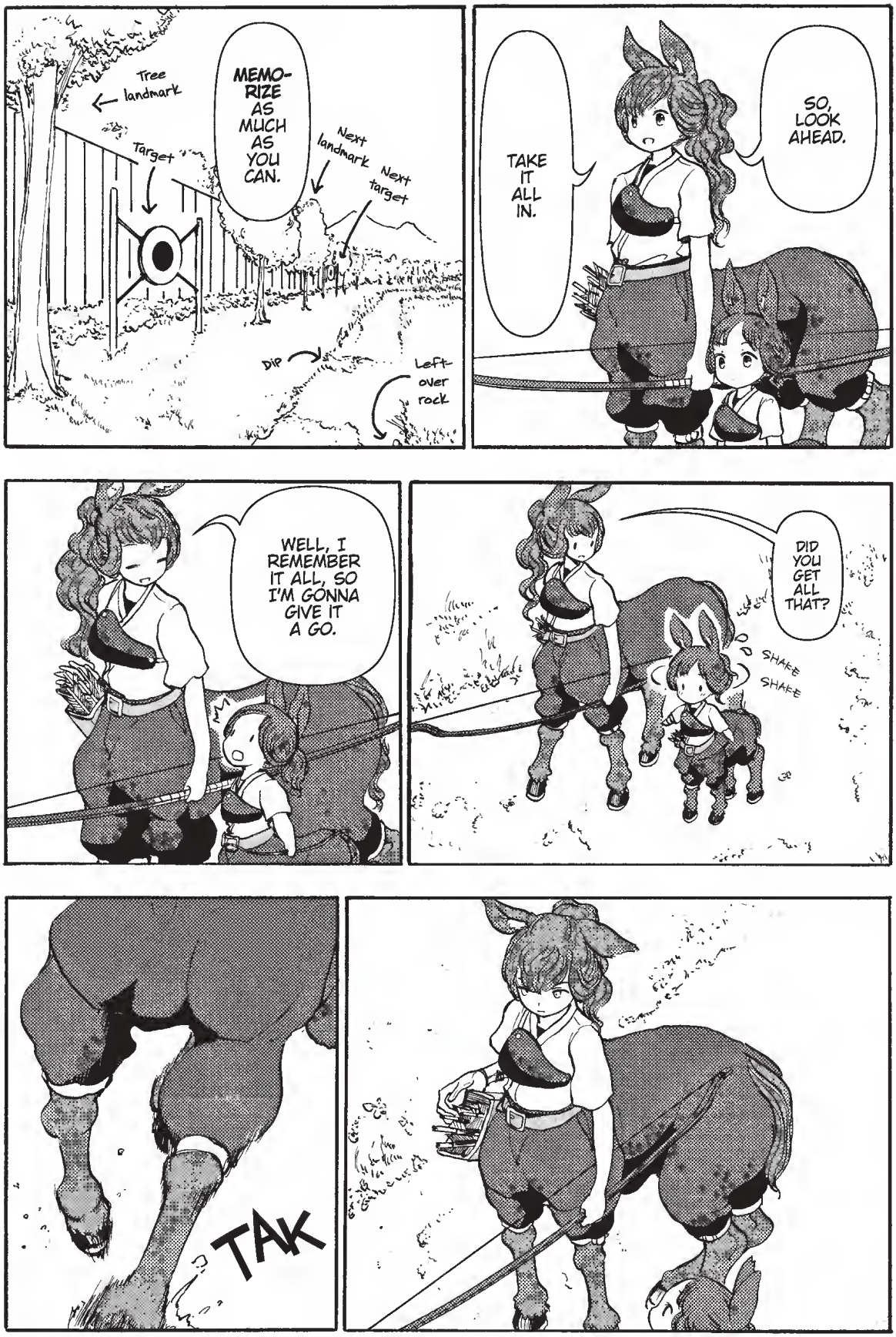
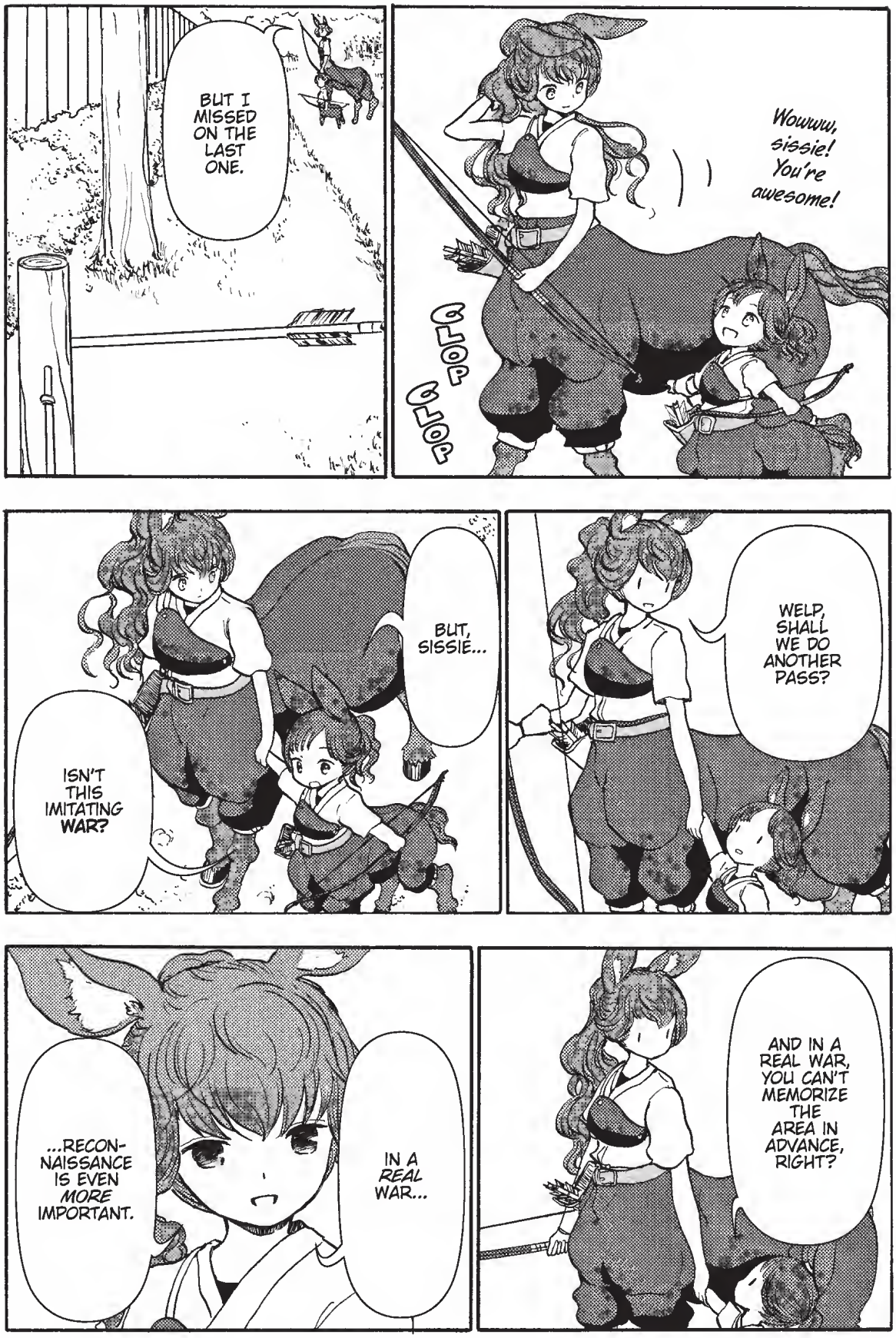


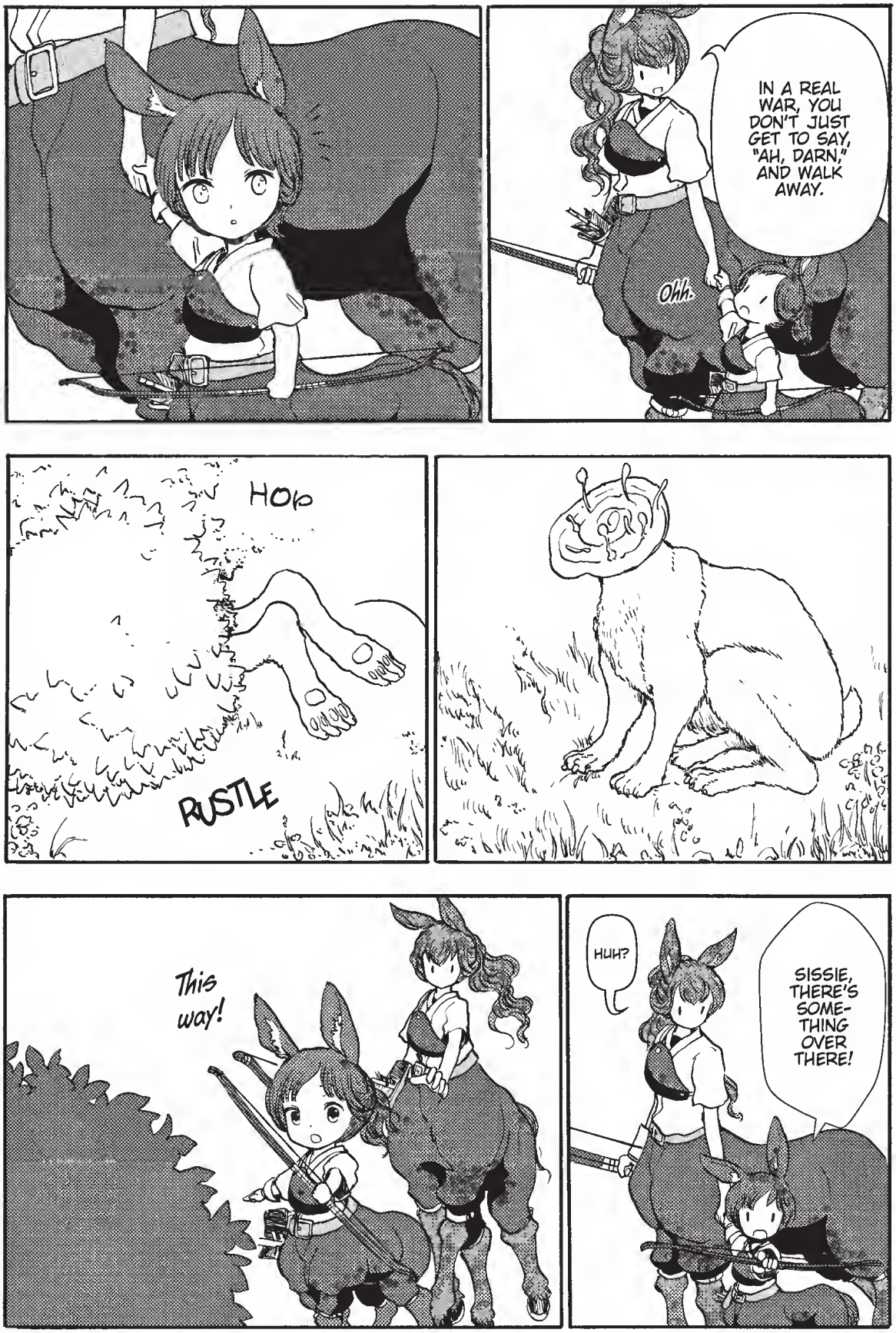

There, there.
sob sob
PAT PAT
FIRST, YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN THE COURSE.
YOU CAN'T GO RUNNING OFF LIKE THAT.

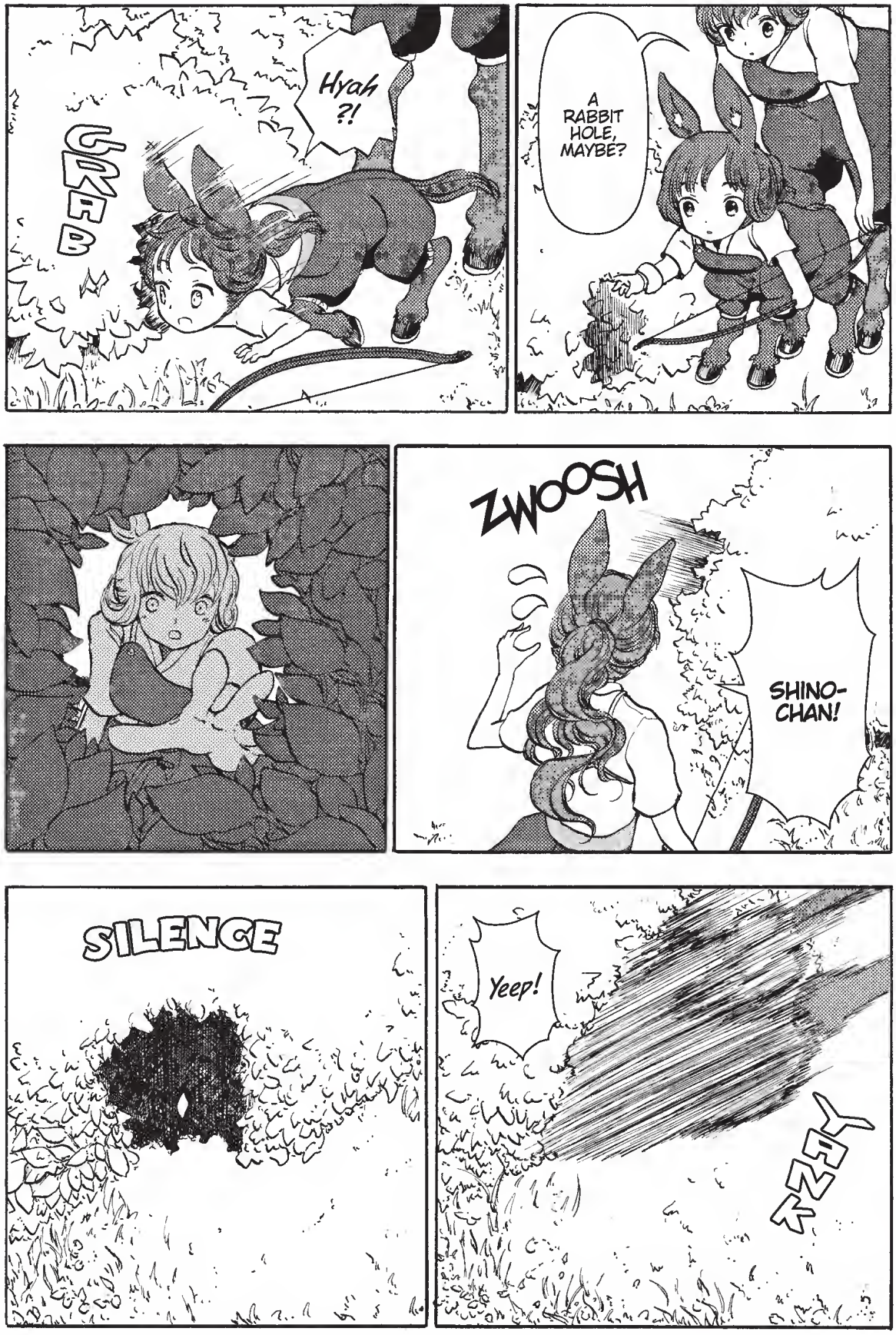

IT'S BEEN LEVELED OUT AS FLAT AS POSSIBLE, AND THE LITTLE ROCKS AND THINGS HAVE BEEN CLEARED OUT...
...BUT THERE ARE STILL DIPS AND BUMPS HERE AND THERE.
THERE'RE PATCHES OF GRASS, TOO.
AND EVEN ROOTS AND MOLEHILLS.
YOU HAVE TO MEMORIZE ALL THAT STUFF.
ALL OF IT?
YOU SHOULDN'T SPEND TOO MUCH TIME STARING AT THE GROUND.
YOU'VE ALSO GOT TO LOOK FOR THE TARGETS AND KNOW WHERE TO SHOOT.
THAT MEANS LOOKING AROUND AT YOUR SURROUND-INGS, TOO.

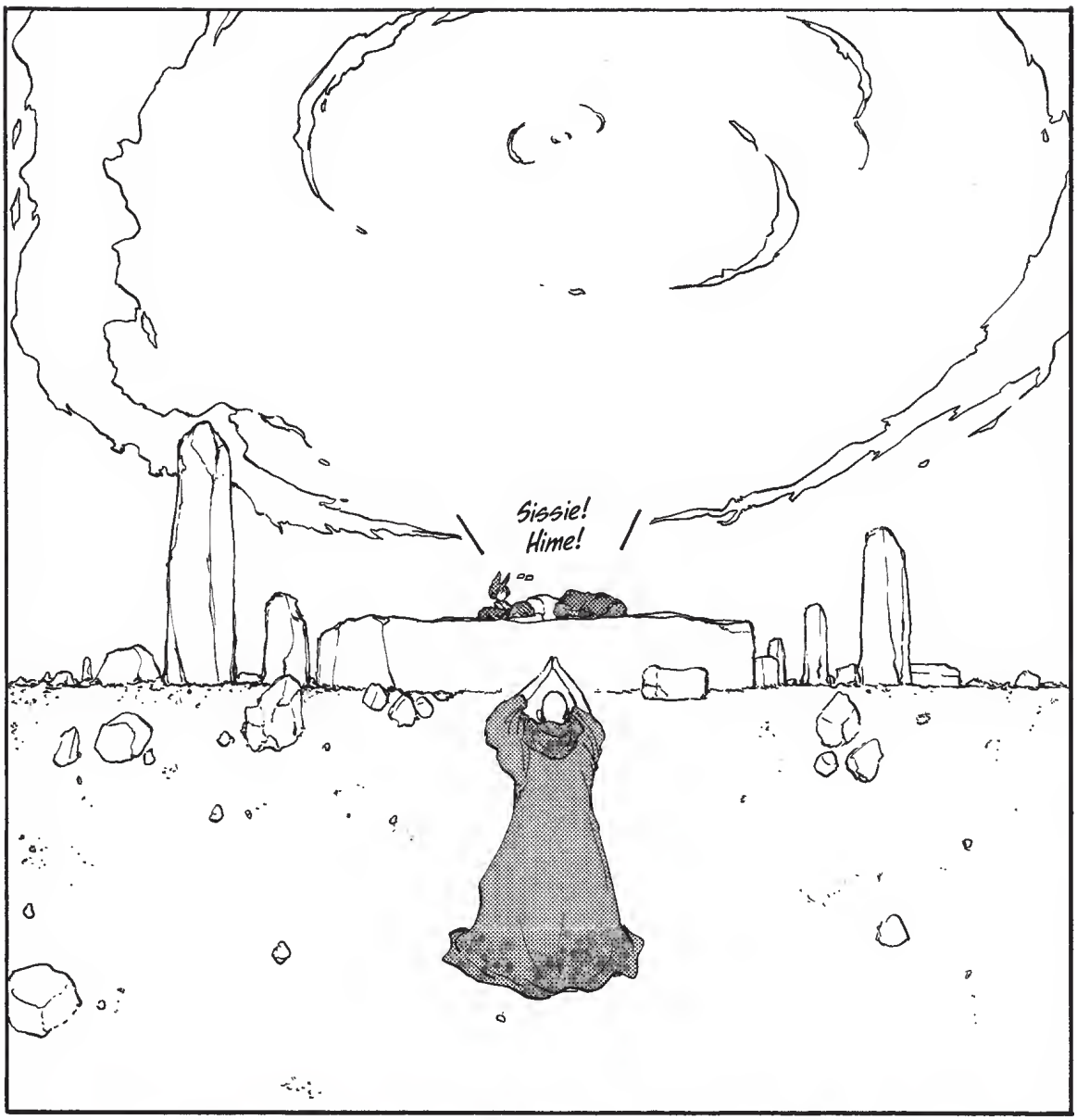

Tree landmark
Target
MEMO-RIZE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN.
Next landmark
Next target
DIP
Left-over rock
SO, LOOK AHEAD.
TAKE IT ALL IN.
WELL, I REMEMBER IT ALL, SO I'M GONNA GIVE IT A GO.
DID YOU GET ALL THAT?
SHAKE SHAKE
TAK

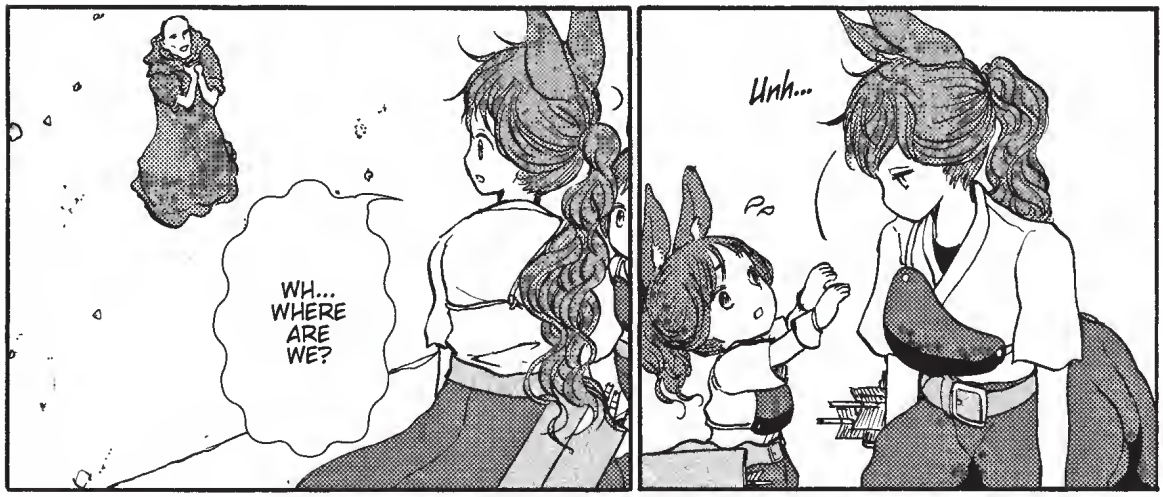
THWIP
THWACK
THWIP


BUT I MISSED ON THE LAST ONE.
Wowww, sissie! You're awesome!
CLOP CLOP
BUT, SISSIE...
ISN'T THIS IMITATING WAR?
WELP, SHALL WE DO ANOTHER PASS?
IN A REAL WAR...
...RECON-NAISSANCE IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.
AND IN A REAL WAR, YOU CAN'T MEMORIZE THE AREA IN ADVANCE, RIGHT?


IN A REAL WAR, YOU DON'T JUST GET TO SAY, "AH, DARN," AND WALK AWAY.
Ohh.
HOlo
RUSTLE
This way!
HUH?
SISSIE, THERE'S SOME-THING OVER THERE!

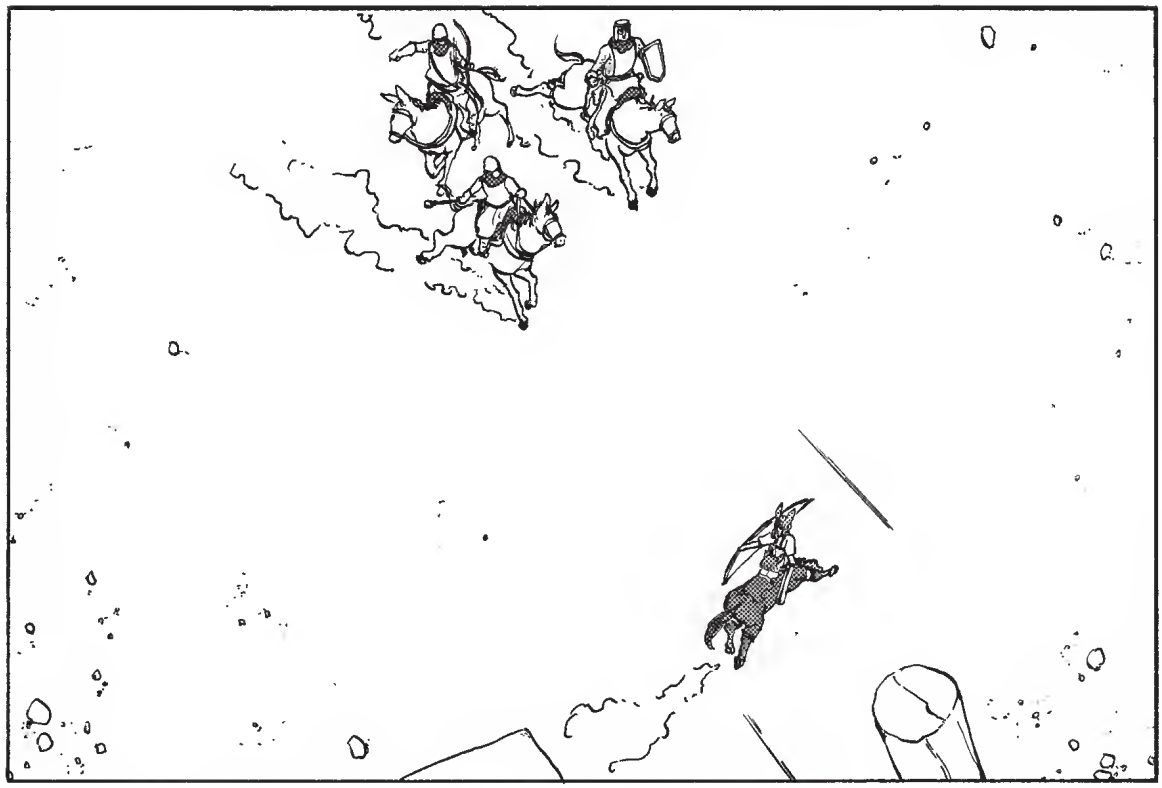

GRAB
Hyah ?!
A RABBIT HOLE, MAYBE?
ZWOOSH
SHINO-CHAN!
SILENCE
Yeep!
FALL

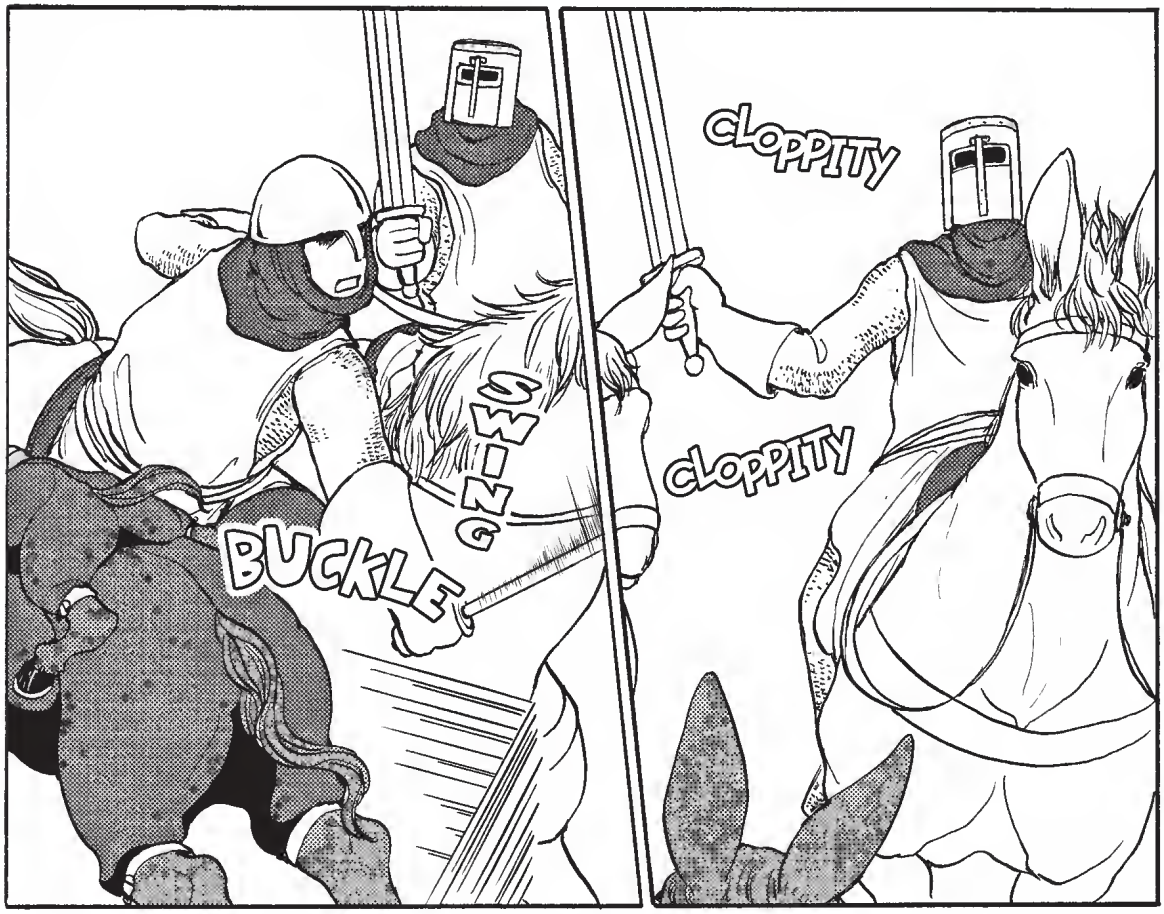

Sissie!
Hime!

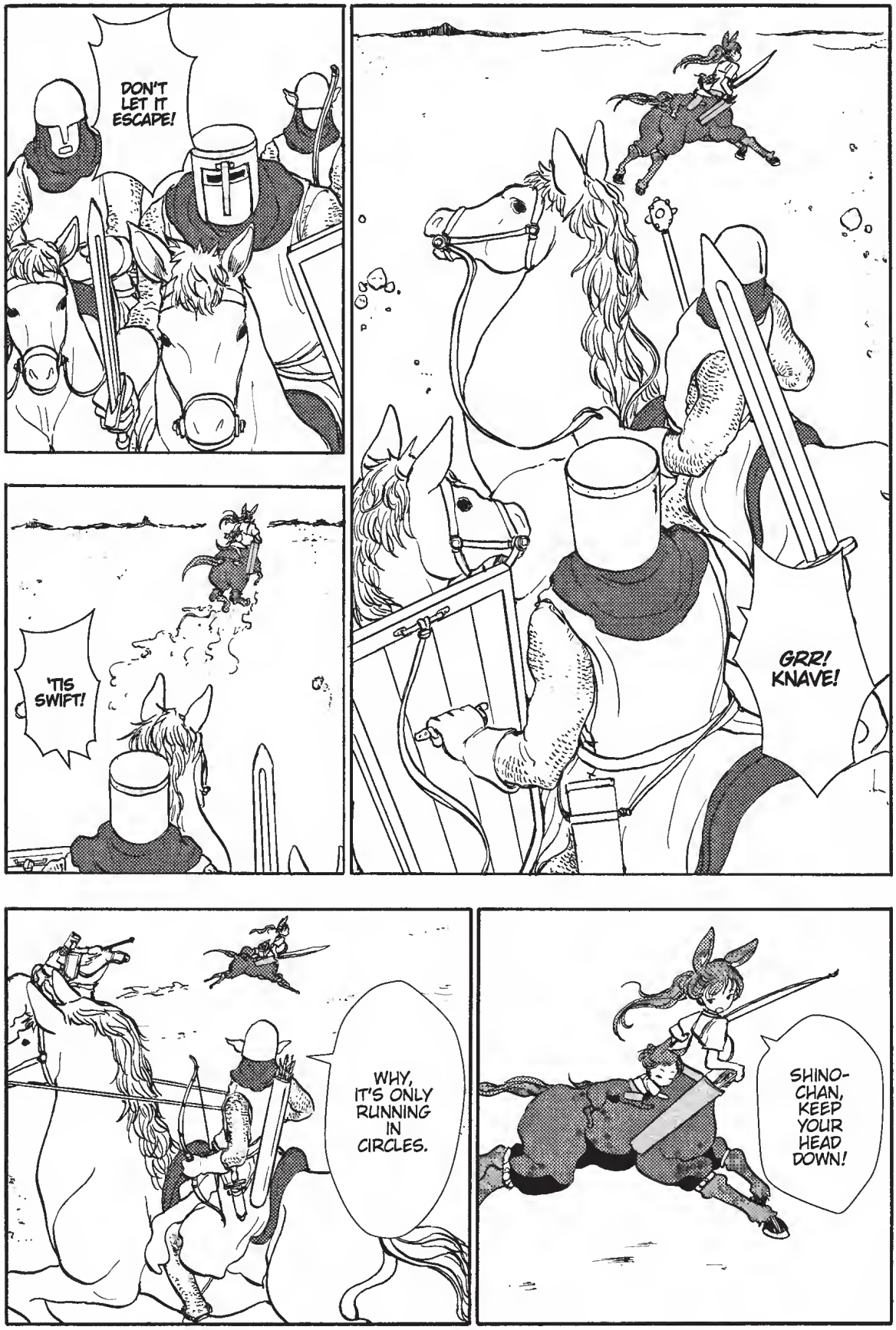

WH... WHERE ARE WE?
Unh...

THWOK
O, THOU BEAST OF HELL WHO HATH ANSWERED MINE CALL, THOU ART MY MASTER!
ERRR, UMM...
WH...
WH...
WHAA?!

THWOOP
STRETCHHH
SHINO-CHAN, GET ON!
WHAT? YOU DON'T MIND?
THIS IS AN EMER-GENCY!
CRACK
HYAH!
THOU SHAN'T GET AWAY, BEAST!
SHINING
THWOOP
THWOOP



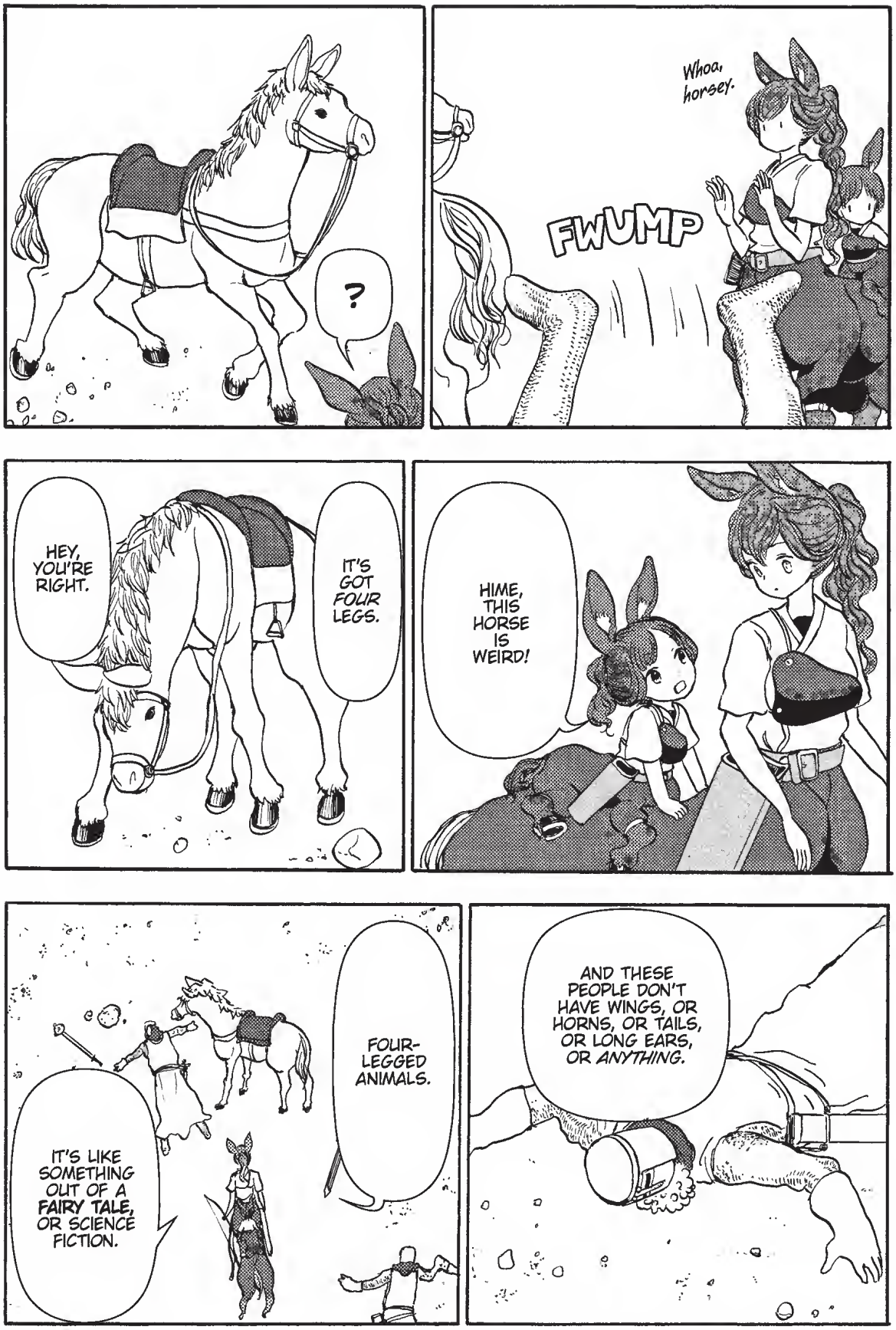

BUCKLE
SWING
CLOPPITY
CLOPPITY


DON'T LET IT ESCAPE!
'TIS SWIFT!
GRR! KNAVE!
WHY, IT'S ONLY RUNNING IN CIRCLES.
SHINO-CHAN, KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN!

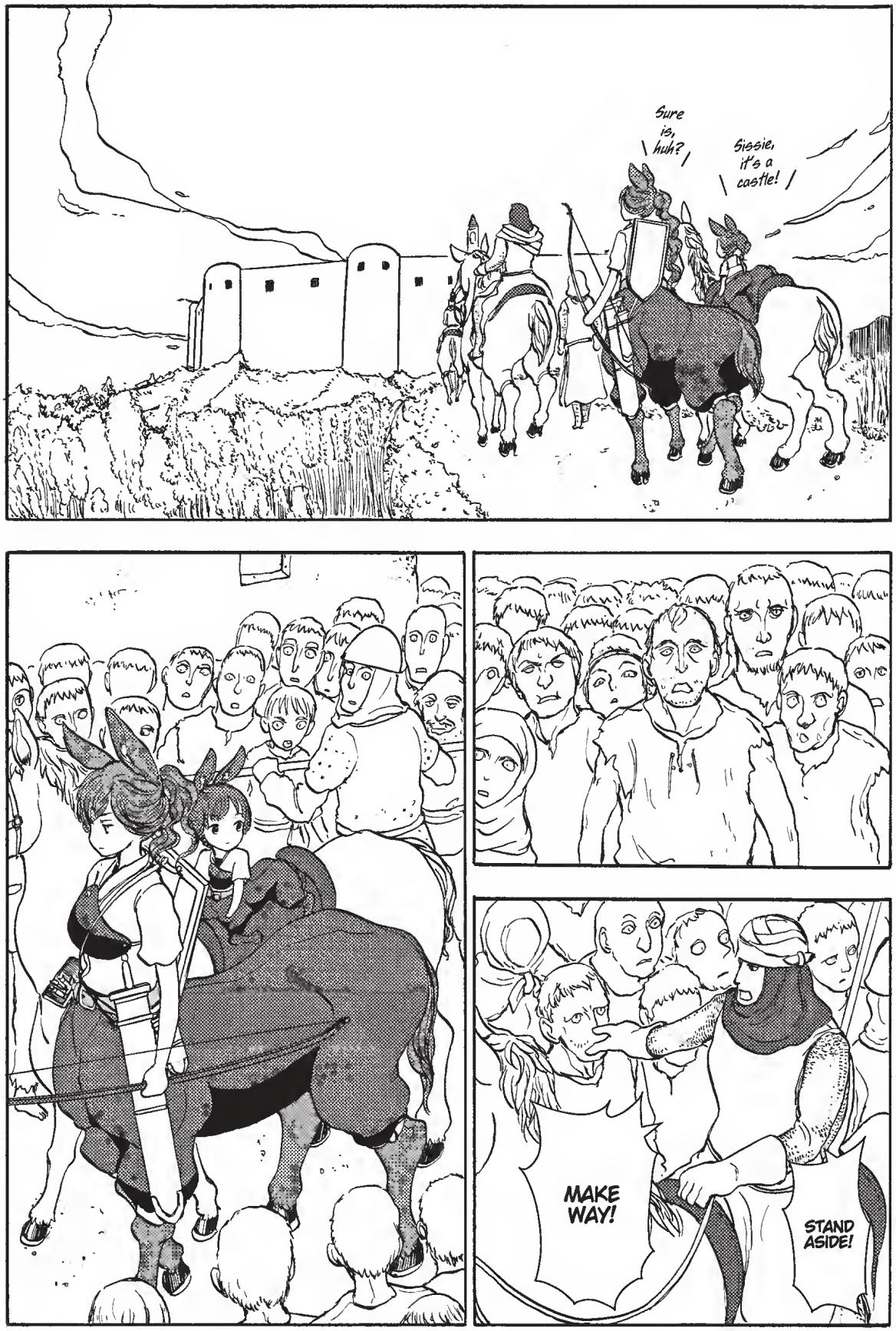
!
HOLD STILL!
WHUMP
K-TANNNG
CRACK
SHF
HOW DARE YOU!

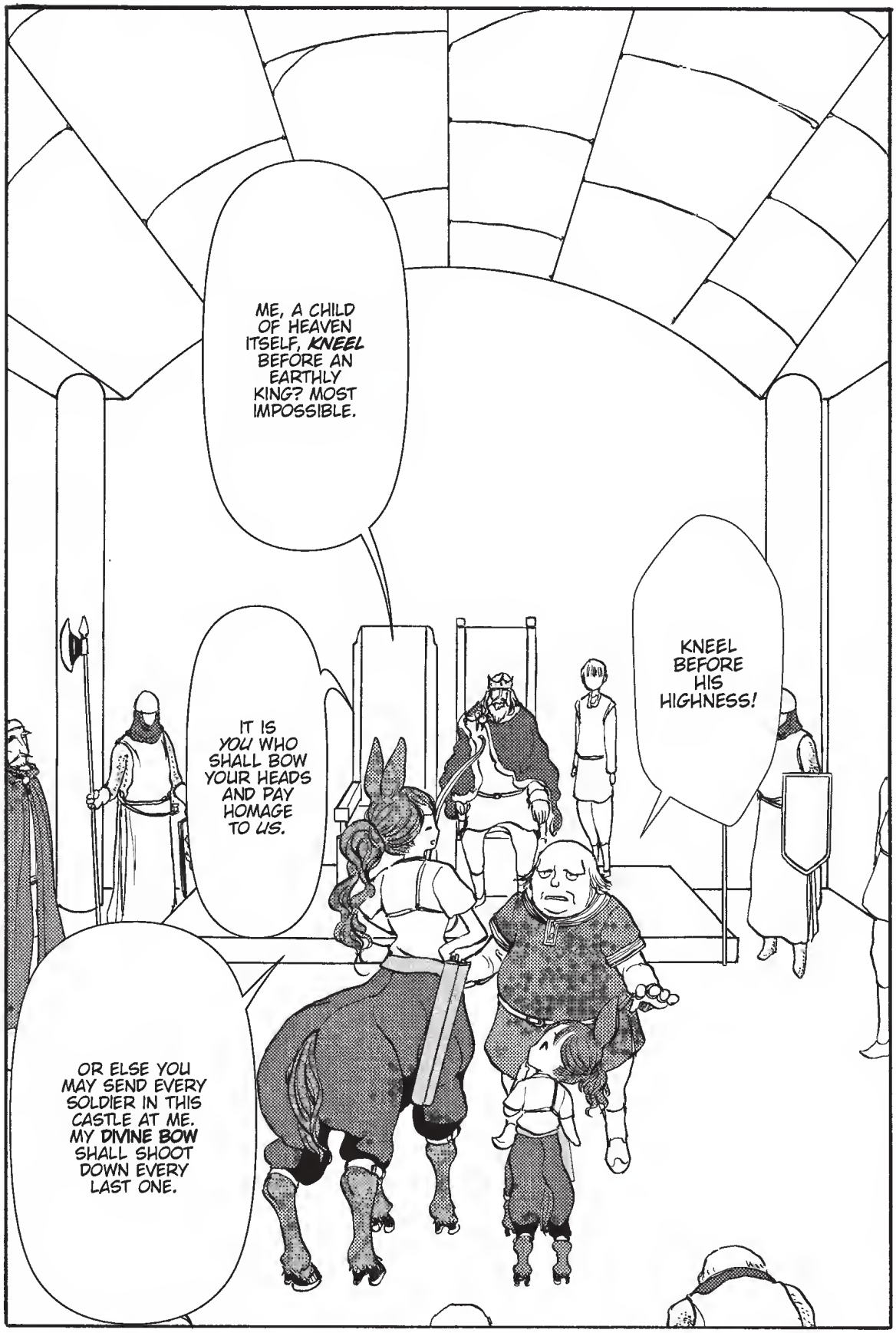
Hiya!
AH-GAH-GAH-GAH !!
CRICKETY-CRACKETY-CRICKETY-CRACKETY
SNAP SNAP SNAP SNAP
OOF!
HAVE AT THEE, DARK BEAST!
NO MORE ARROWS!

HUP!
HEAVE


?
Whoa, horsey.
FWUMP
HEY, YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT'S GOT *FOUR* LEGS.
HIME, THIS HORSE IS WEIRD!
IT'S LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A **FAIRY TALE,** OR SCIENCE FICTION.
FOUR-LEGGED ANIMALS.
AND THESE PEOPLE DON'T HAVE WINGS, OR HORNS, OR TAILS, OR LONG EARS, OR *ANYTHING.*

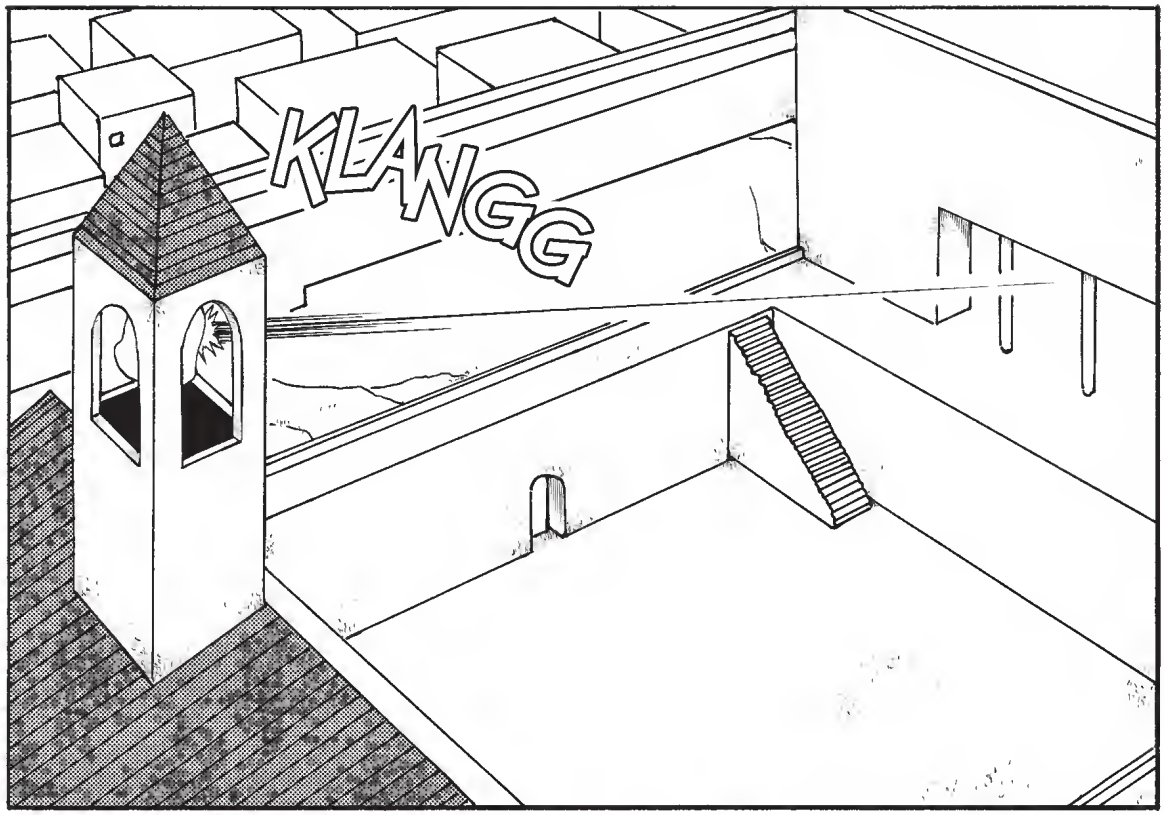
POKE
POKE
URRRGH ...
Oh, good, he's alive.
BEAST!
THOU HADST BEST FINISH US.
WE, THE THREE KNIGHTS OF LOGAN, SHALL ACCEPT NO MERCY FROM A DEMON.
WELL, I'M NOT A DEMON.
YOU'D BETTER TEND TO THOSE WOUNDS.
Otherwise bacteria will get in and you'll die.
OH, BUT IF YOU DON'T DO AS I SAY, I WILL SHOOT YOU.
Er, also please explain what's going on.
What is "bacteria"? Some manner of curse?

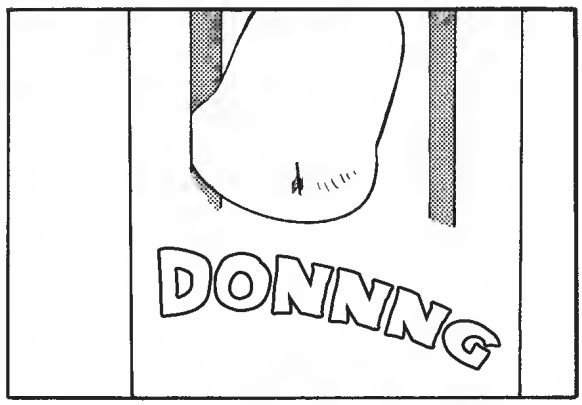

Sure is, huh?
Sissie, it's a castle!
MAKE WAY!
STAND ASIDE!

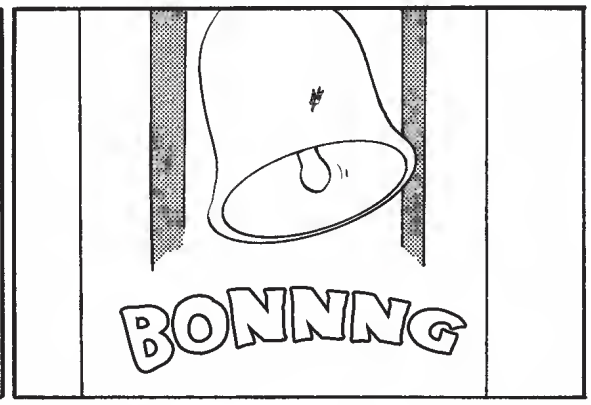

ME, A CHILD OF HEAVEN ITSELF, KNEEL BEFORE AN EARTHLY KING? MOST IMPOSSIBLE.
IT IS YOU WHO SHALL BOW YOUR HEADS AND PAY HOMAGE TO US.
KNEEL BEFORE HIS HIGHNESS!
OR ELSE YOU MAY SEND EVERY SOLDIER IN THIS CASTLE AT ME. MY DIVINE BOW SHALL SHOOT DOWN EVERY LAST ONE.

YOUR HIGHNESS, IF I MAY.
YOU'VE ALREADY DEFIED ME ONCE. THERE WILL BE NO SECOND TIME.
MEANING?
PERHAPS 'TIS TIME TO PUT YOU-KNOW-WHAT TO THE TEST?
I KNOW NOT IF THEY BE DEVIL OR ANGEL, BUT 'TIS TRUE THAT SHE FELLED THE PROUD THREE KNIGHTS.
This is the so-called greatest archer in all the empire?
Urggghh!
YES, THAT. JUST THE THING TO BRING OUR GRACIOUS VISITOR TO SHAME.
AHH.
THE IRON BOW! 'TWAS CREATED FOR BLUFFING!

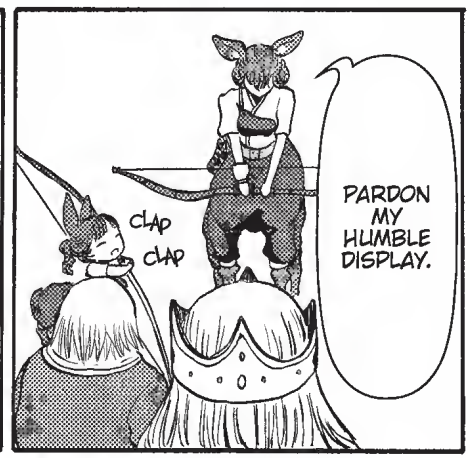
TWANNNG
HERE.
LIFT
ALLOW ME A PRACTICE SHOT.
FEELS PRETTY DECENT.
STRETCHHH

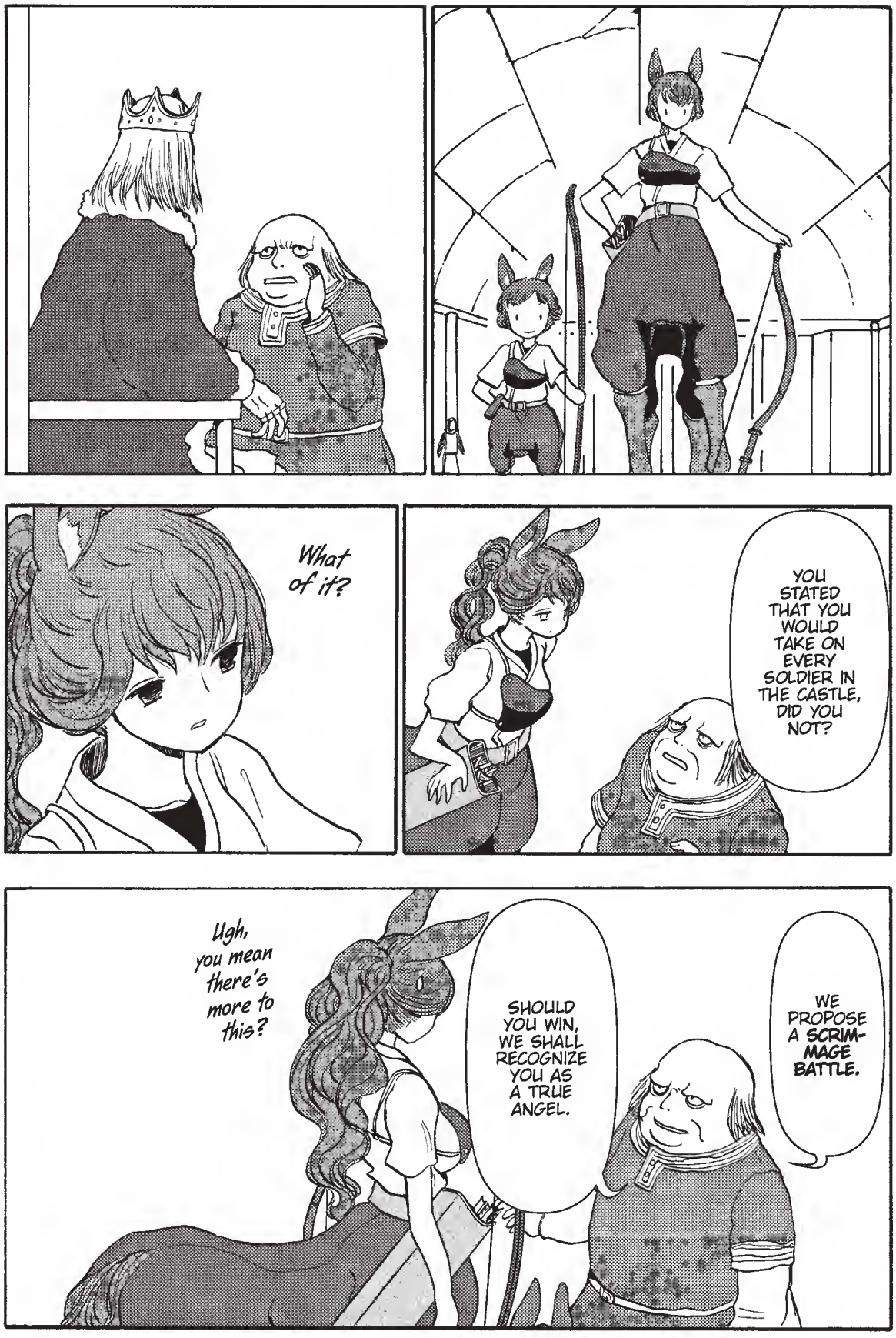

KLANGG

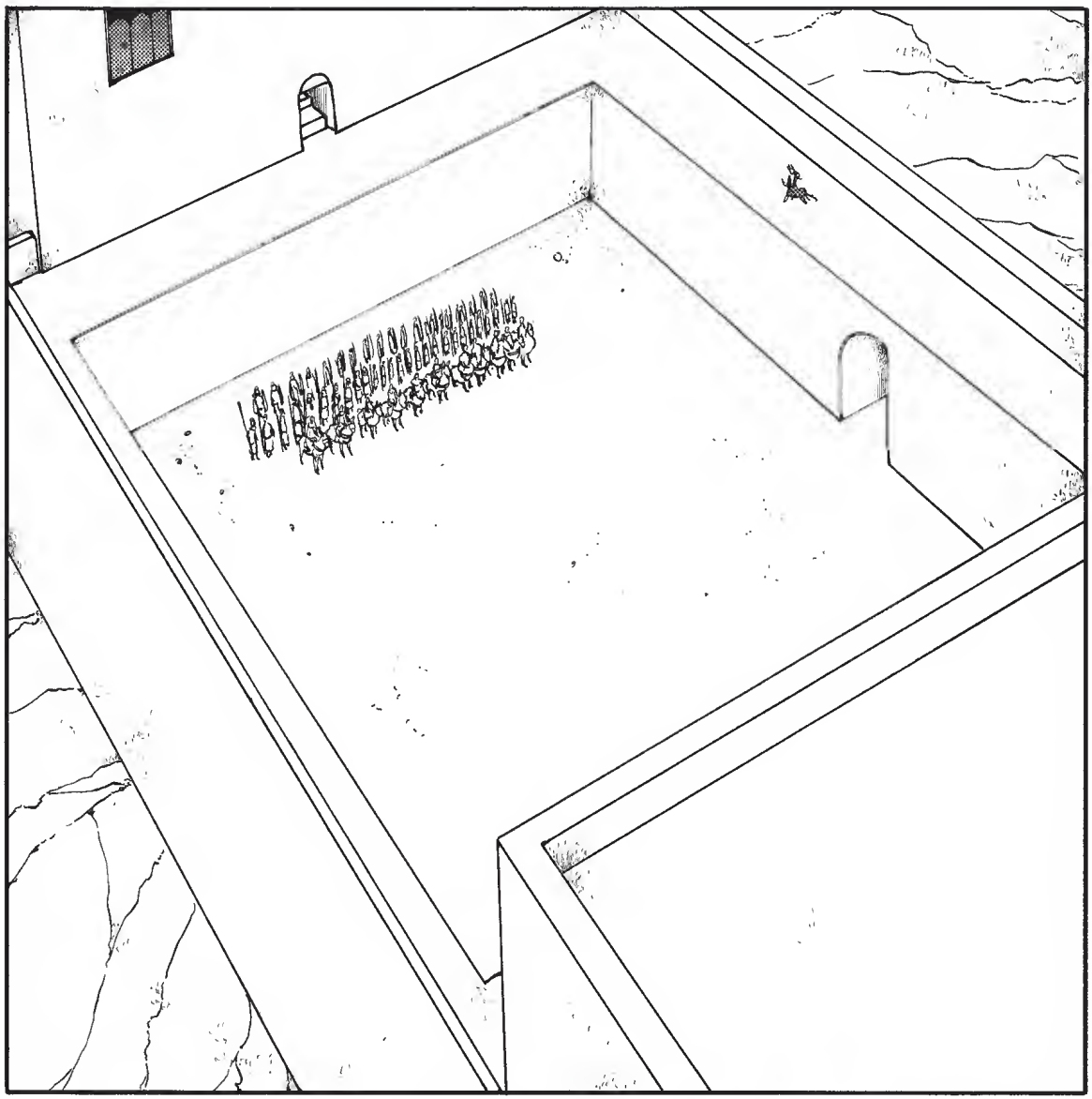

DONNNG

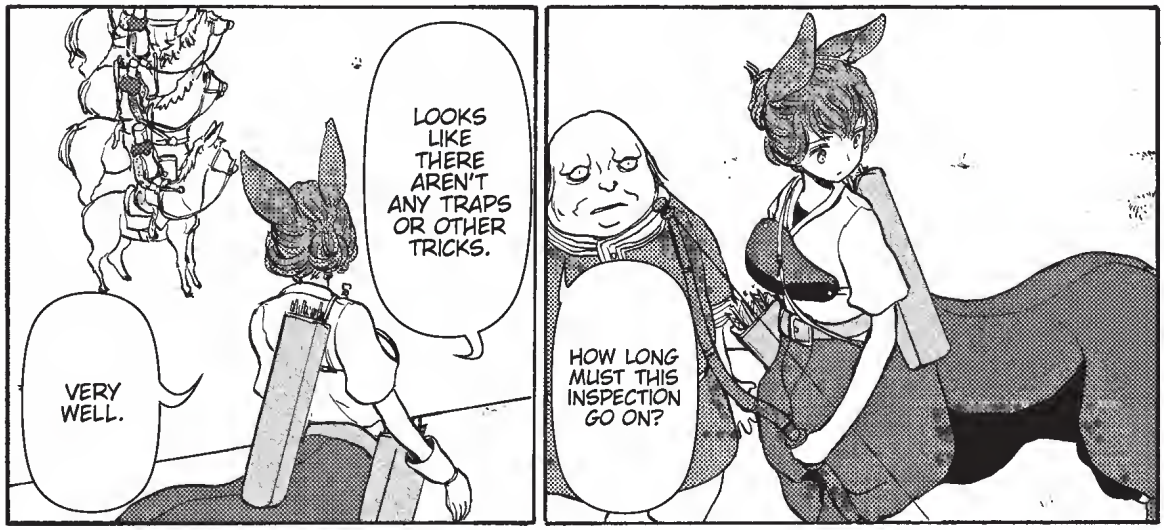

BONNNG

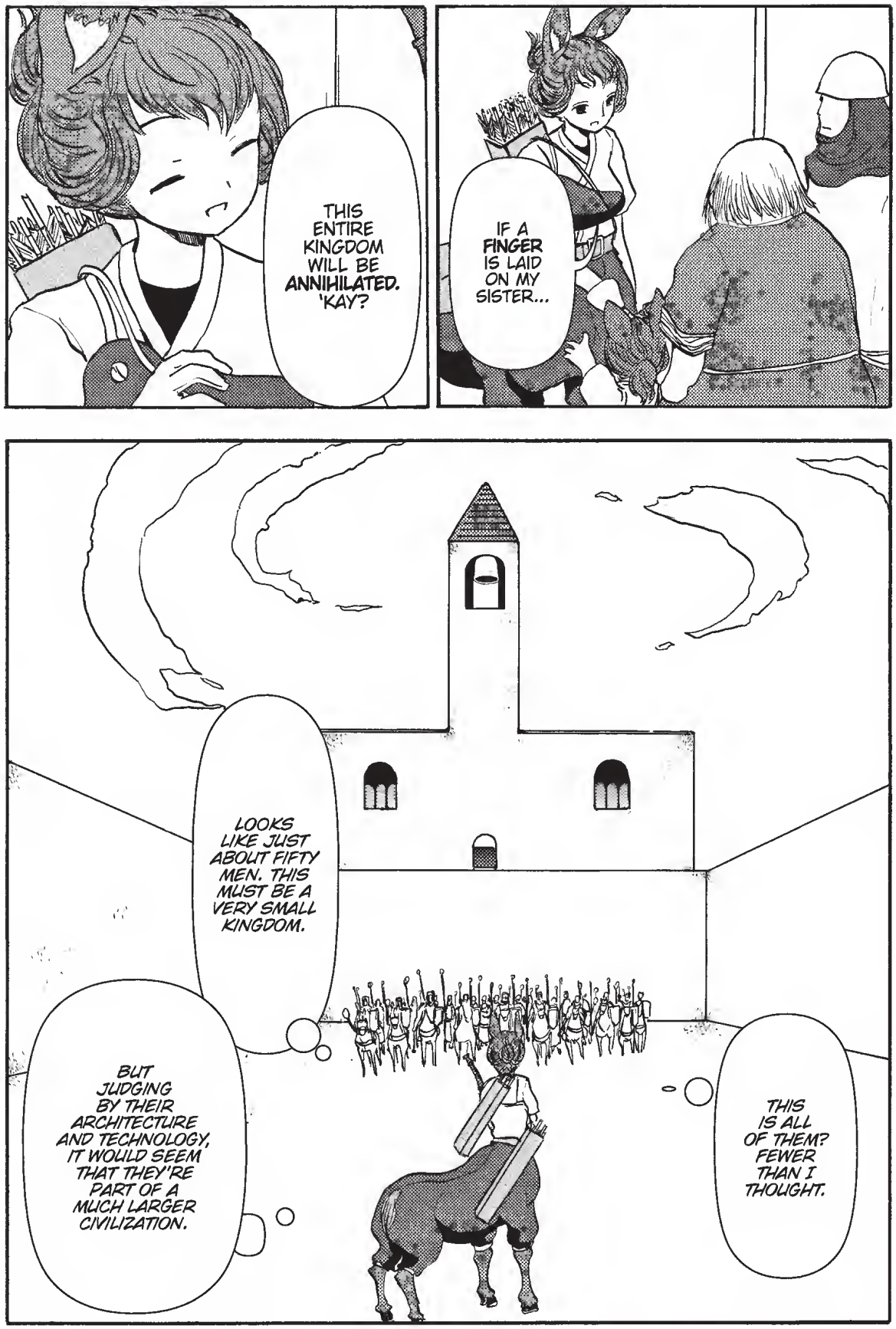
"Listen. If you're ever in a situation where you and your opponent don't know each other's strengths, build yourself as much as you can. The opponent will try to read into it and it'll make you look like a big deal."
AW, DANG! I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HUMBLE!


CLAP
CLAP
PARDON MY HUMBLE DISPLAY.


What of it?
YOU STATED THAT YOU WOULD TAKE ON EVERY SOLDIER IN THE CASTLE, DID YOU NOT?
Ugh, you mean there's more to this?
SHOULD YOU WIN, WE SHALL RECOGNIZE YOU AS A TRUE ANGEL.
WE PROPOSE A SCRIM-MAGE BATTLE.

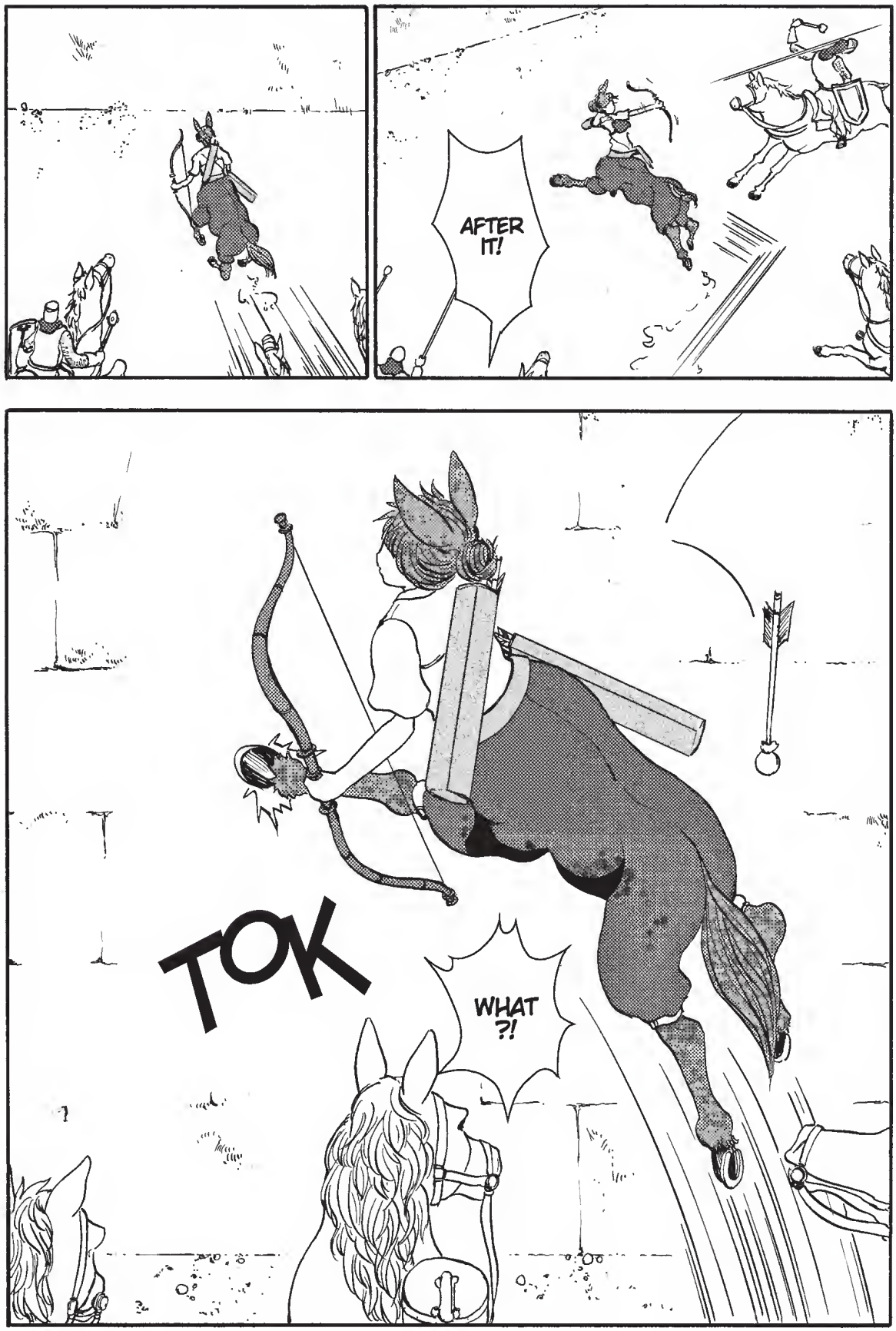


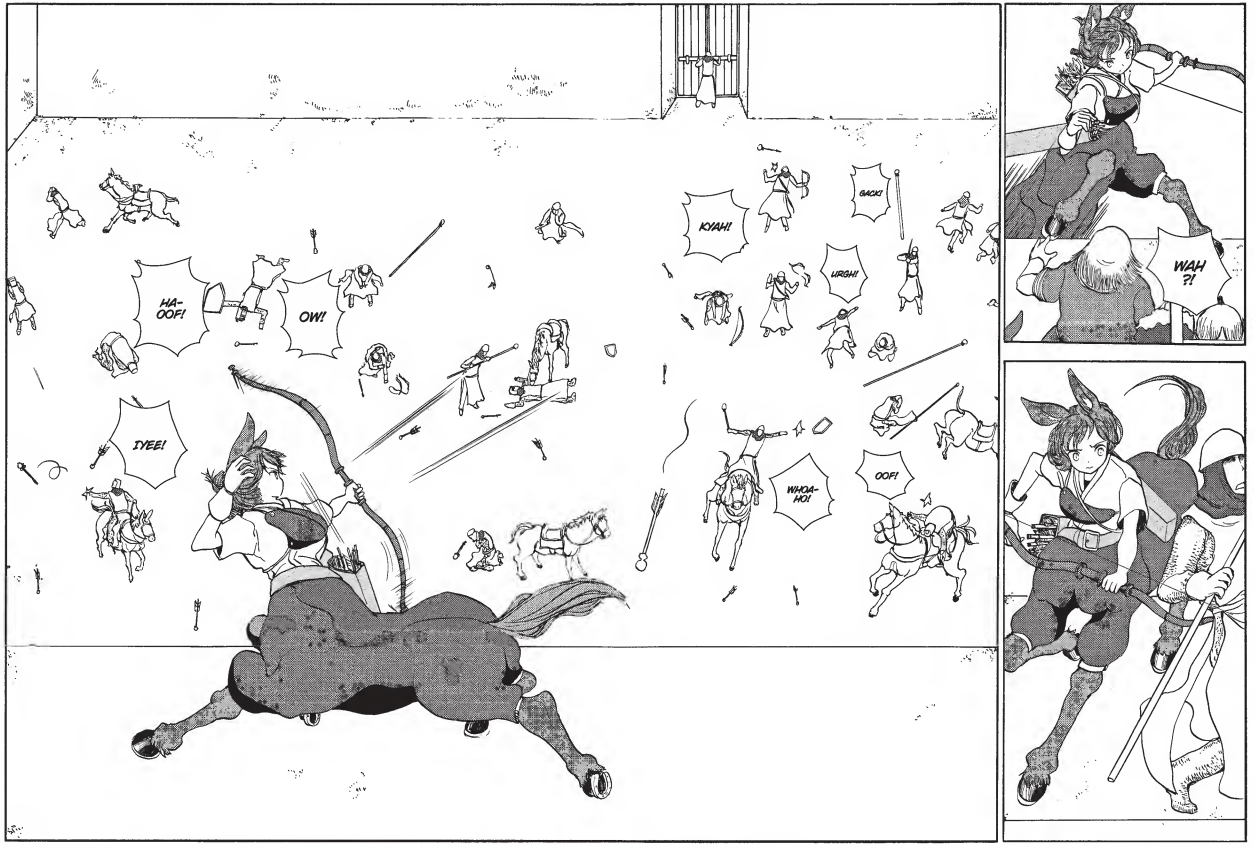

LOOKS LIKE THERE AREN'T ANY TRAPS OR OTHER TRICKS.
VERY WELL.
HOW LONG MUST THIS INSPECTION GO ON?


THIS ENTIRE KINGDOM WILL BE ANNIHILATED. 'KAY?
IF A FINGER IS LAID ON MY SISTER...
LOOKS LIKE JUST ABOUT FIFTY MEN. THIS MUST BE A VERY SMALL KINGDOM.
BUT JUDGING BY THEIR ARCHITECTURE AND TECHNOLOGY, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THEY'RE PART OF A MUCH LARGER CIVILIZATION.
THIS IS ALL OF THEM? FEWER THAN I THOUGHT.

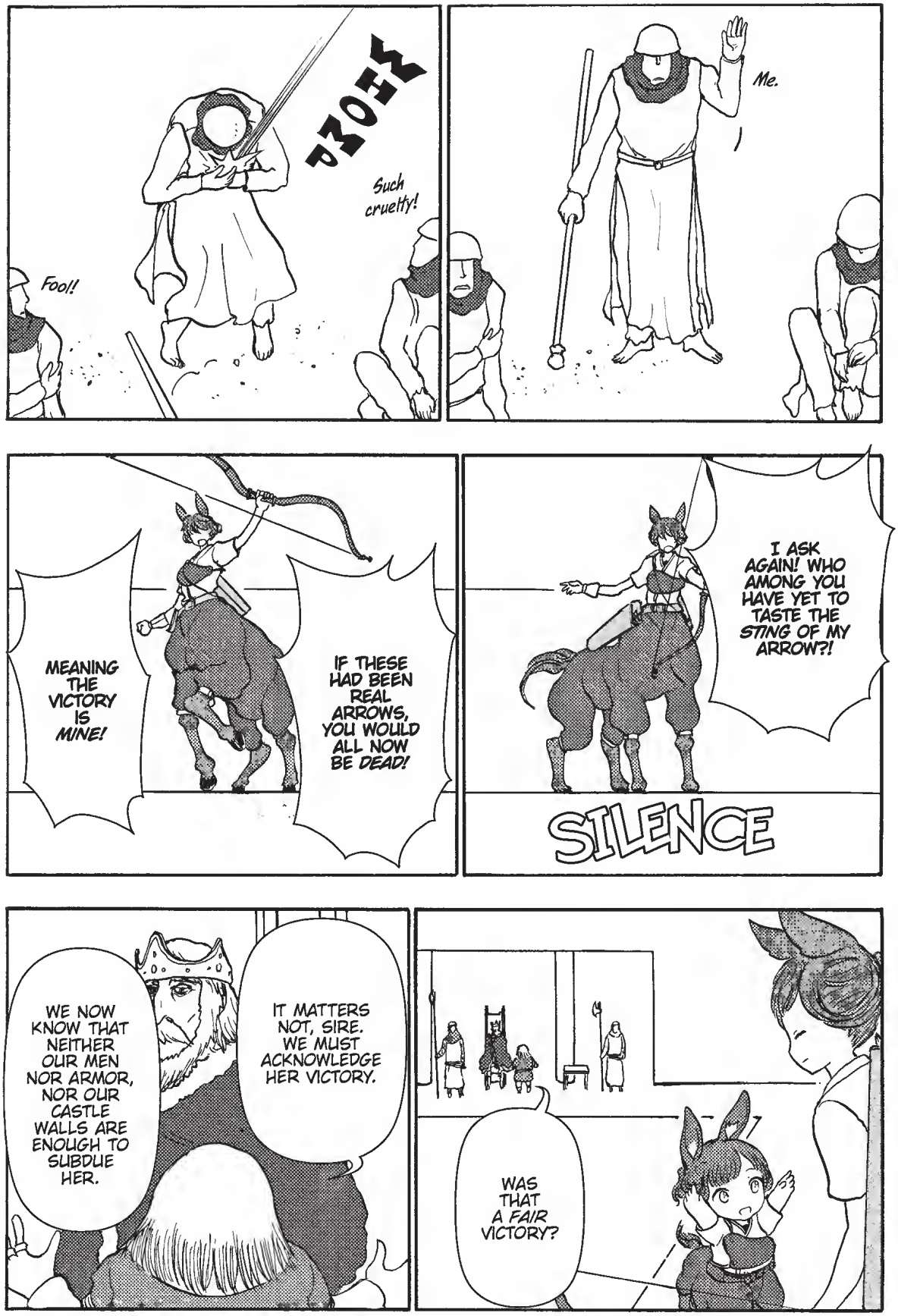
STRETCHHH
GALLOP
GALLOP
GONNNG
DONNNG
BEGIN!
F-TOF
OUCH!
GYAH!
WHUMP
OWW!
HURK!
WHACK
WHOMP

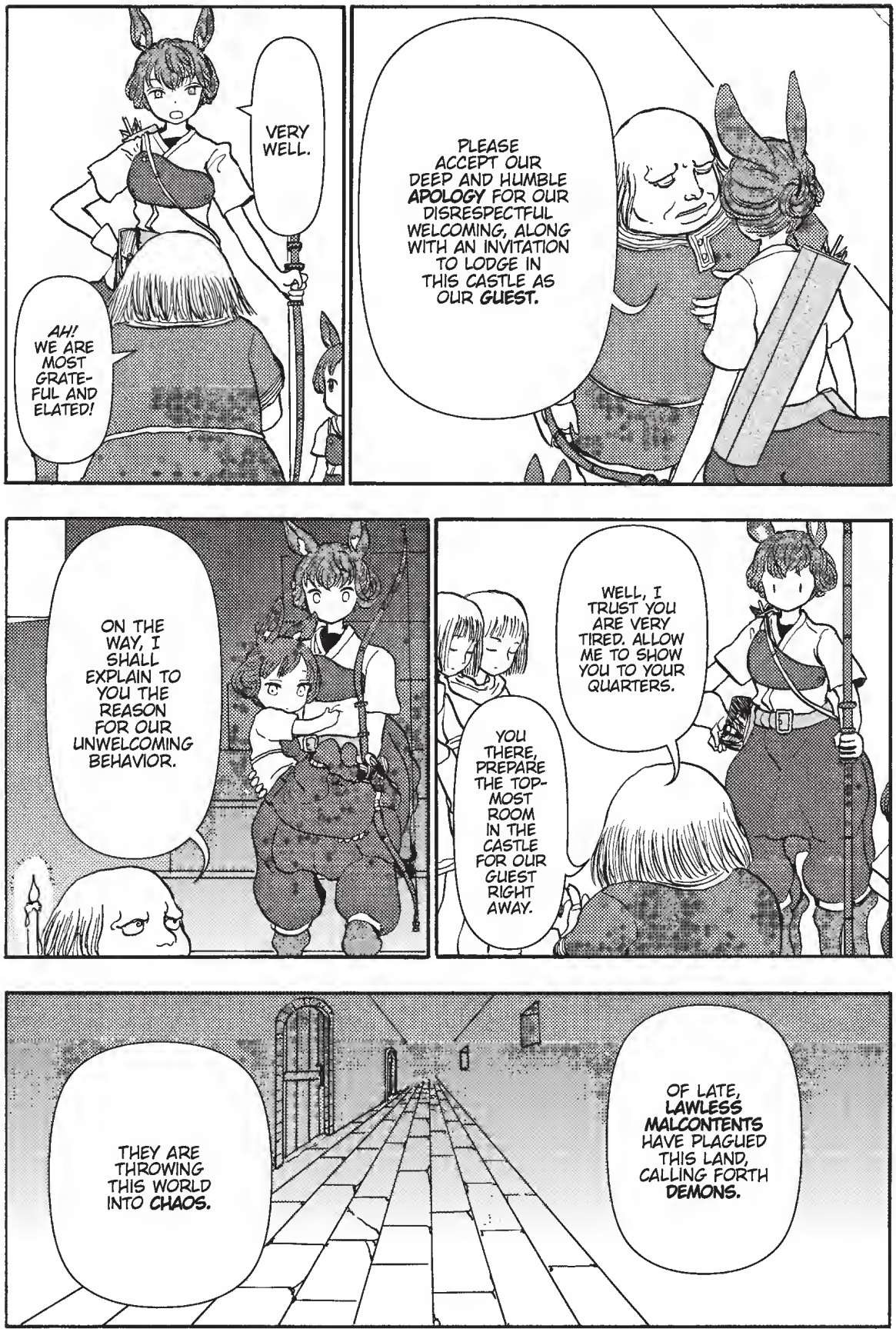
RAHHH!
WAVER
HRK... 'TIS BUT A... FLESH WOUND...
HEYYY, NO FAIR! IF YOU'RE HIT, YOU HAVE TO STAY DEAD!
WHA...?
OH-HO. RUNNING AWAY, IS SHE?
FWIP
JEEZ!

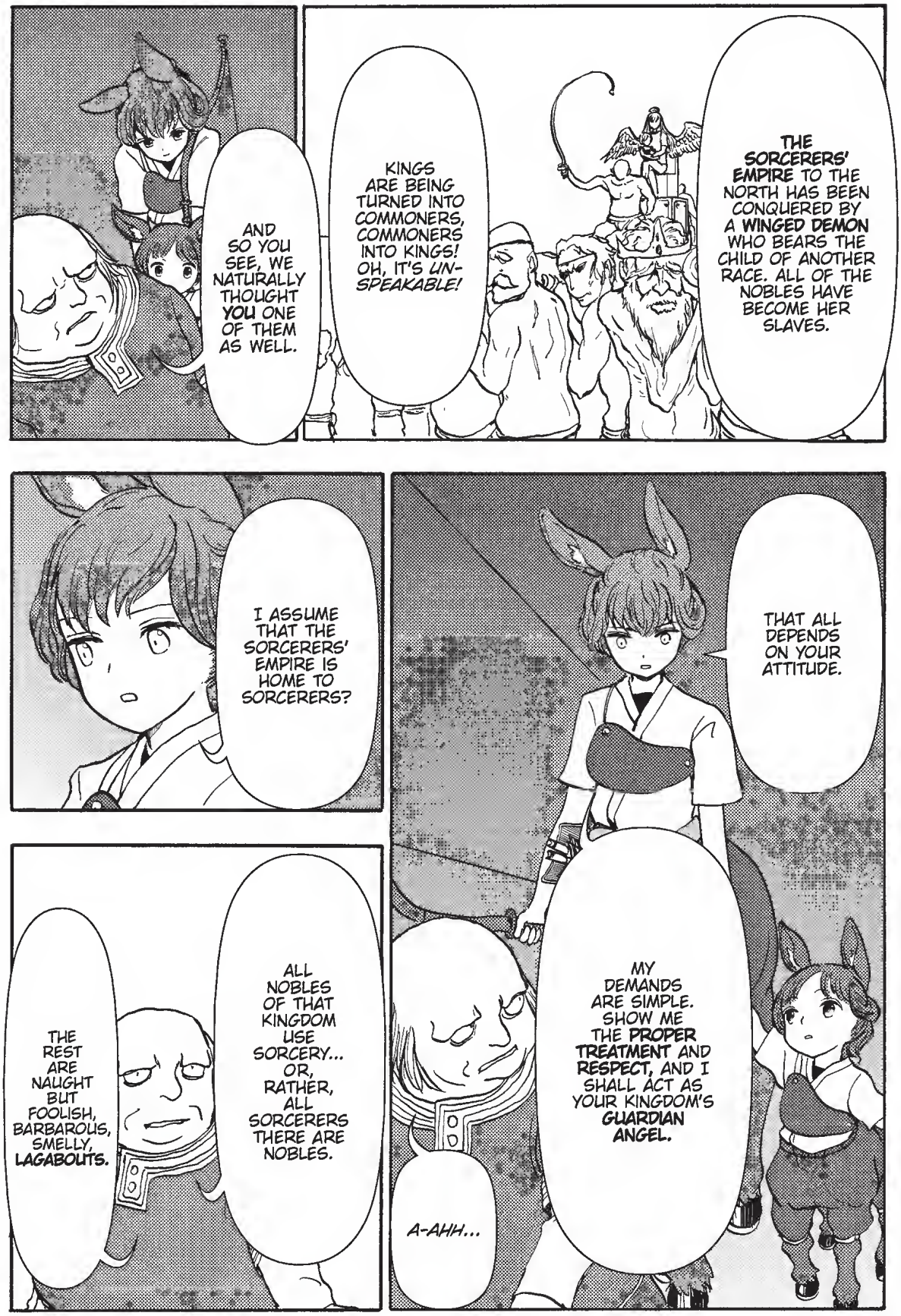

AFTER IT!
TOK
WHAT ?!

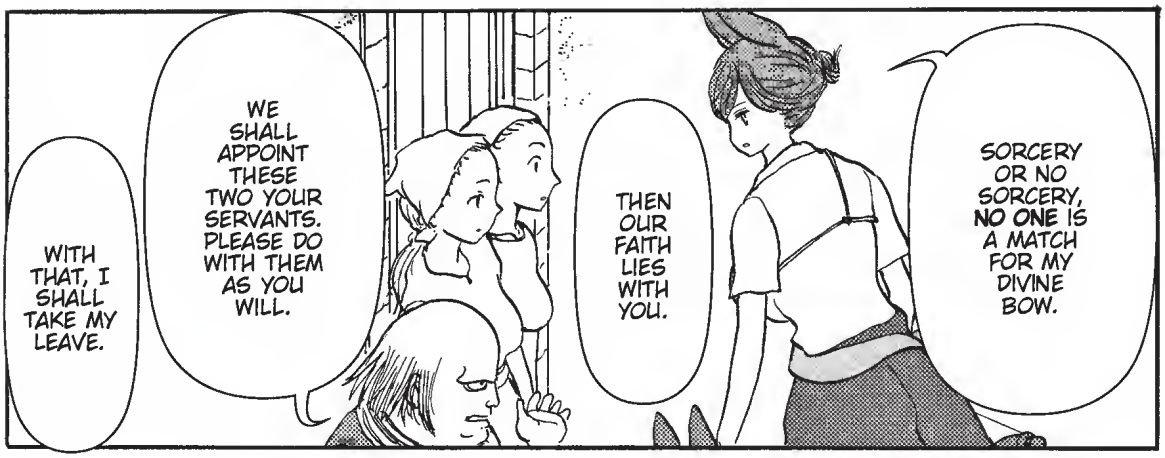

HA-OOF!
OW!
IYEE!
KYAH!
GACK!
URGH!
WHOA-HO!
OOF!
WAH ?!

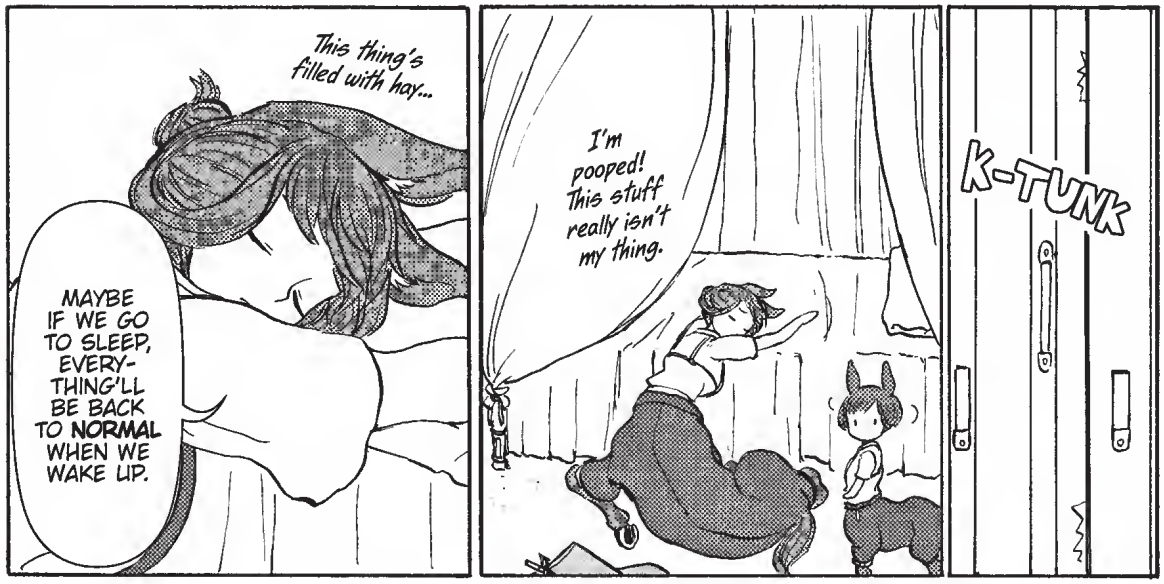
IS THIS ALLOW-ED?
Go, sissie!
Gyah!
k-
KLANNG
GONNNG
ARE THERE ANY AMONG YOU WHO HAVEN'T TASTED THE STING OF MY ARROW?!
DONNNG
Owww...

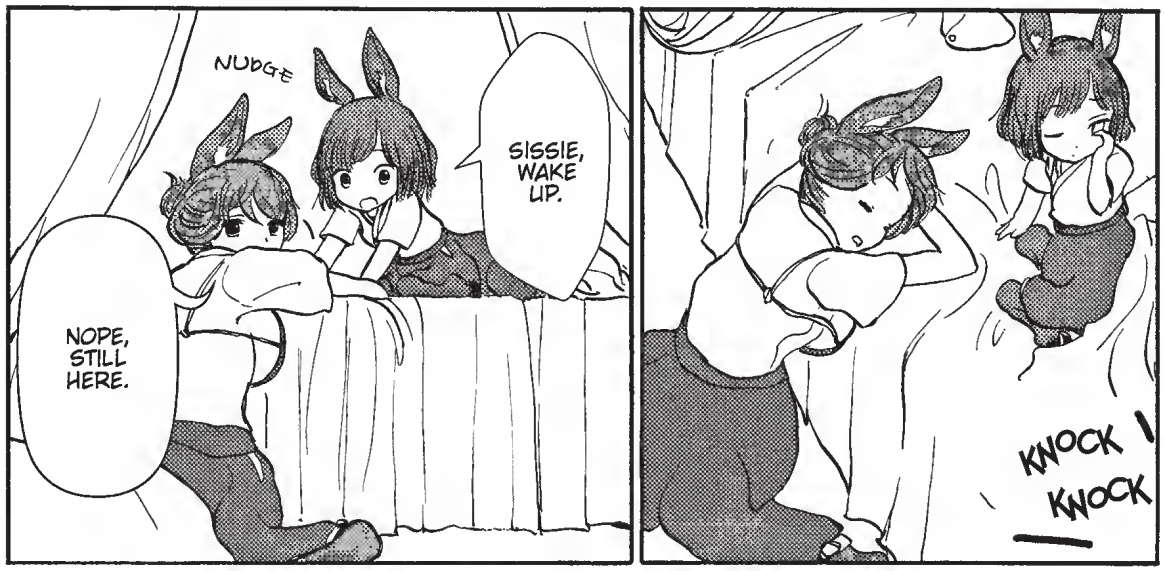

Fool!
Such cruelty!
SHOCK
Me.
MEANING THE VICTORY IS MINE!
IF THESE HAD BEEN REAL ARROWS, YOU WOULD ALL NOW BE DEAD!
I ASK AGAIN! WHO AMONG YOU HAVE YET TO TASTE THE STING OF MY ARROW?!
SILENCE
WE NOW KNOW THAT NEITHER OUR MEN NOR ARMOR, NOR OUR CASTLE WALLS ARE ENOUGH TO SUBDUE HER.
IT MATTERS NOT, SIRE. WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE HER VICTORY.
WAS THAT A FAIR VICTORY?


VERY WELL.
AH! WE ARE MOST GRATE-FUL AND ELATED!
PLEASE ACCEPT OUR DEEP AND HUMBLE APOLOGY FOR OUR DISRESPECTFUL WELCOMING, ALONG WITH AN INVITATION TO LODGE IN THIS CASTLE AS OUR GUEST.
ON THE WAY, I SHALL EXPLAIN TO YOU THE REASON FOR OUR UNWELCOMING BEHAVIOR.
WELL, I TRUST YOU ARE VERY TIRED. ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU TO YOUR QUARTERS.
YOU THERE, PREPARE THE TOP-MOST ROOM IN THE CASTLE FOR OUR GUEST RIGHT AWAY.
THEY ARE THROWING THIS WORLD INTO CHAOS.
OF LATE, LAWLESS MALCONTENTS HAVE PLAGUED THIS LAND, CALLING FORTH DEMONS.


THE SORCERERS' EMPIRE TO THE NORTH HAS BEEN CONQUERED BY A WINGED DEMON WHO BEARS THE CHILD OF ANOTHER RACE. ALL OF THE NOBLES HAVE BECOME HER SLAVES.
KINGS ARE BEING TURNED INTO COMMONERS, COMMONERS INTO KINGS! OH, IT'S UN-SPEAKABLE!
AND SO YOU SEE, WE NATURALLY THOUGHT YOU ONE OF THEM AS WELL.
THAT ALL DEPENDS ON YOUR ATTITUDE.
MY DEMANDS ARE SIMPLE. SHOW ME THE PROPER TREATMENT AND RESPECT, AND I SHALL ACT AS YOUR KINGDOM'S GUARDIAN ANGEL.
A-AHH...
I ASSUME THAT THE SORCERERS' EMPIRE IS HOME TO SORCERERS?
ALL NOBLES OF THAT KINGDOM USE SORCERY... OR, RATHER, ALL SORCERERS THERE ARE NOBLES.
THE REST ARE NAUGHT BUT FOOLISH, BARBAROUS, SMELLY, LAGABOUTS.


SORCERY OR NO SORCERY, NO ONE IS A MATCH FOR MY DIVINE BOW.
THEN OUR FAITH LIES WITH YOU.
WE SHALL APPOINT THESE TWO YOUR SERVANTS. PLEASE DO WITH THEM AS YOU WILL.
WITH THAT, I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE.


K-TUNK
I'm pooped! This stuff really isn't my thing.
This thing's filled with hay...
MAYBE IF WE GO TO SLEEP, EVERY-THING'LL BE BACK TO NORMAL WHEN WE WAKE UP.


KNOCK KNOCK
NUDGE
SISSIE, WAKE UP.
NOPE, STILL HERE.

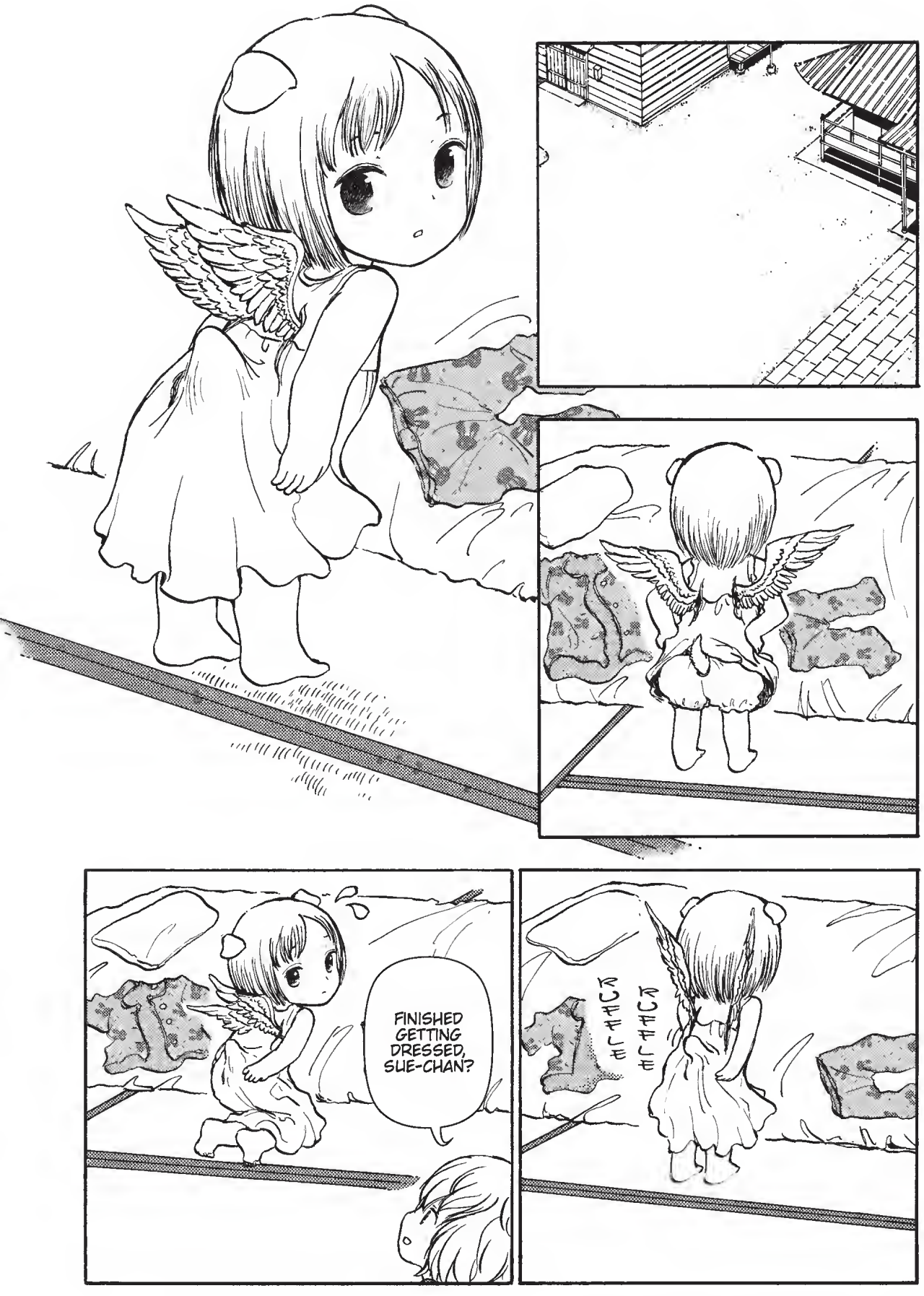
A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD:
THE MASKED RUNNER

THIS TALE OF A CYBORG LOCKED IN BATTLE WITH A SECRET EVIL ORGANIZATION MADE USE OF A BEETLE MOTIF POPULAR WITH CHILDREN AND PORTRAYED BOTH PROTAGONIST AND ANTAGONIST AS MEMBERS OF THE FOUR-ARMED RACE. OF COURSE, THE FOUR-ARMED RACE HAD ALREADY GONE EXTINCT AND THE LOWER ARMS WERE FAKE PROPS, BUT THIS SUCCESSFULLY DEFUSED THE POTENTIAL FOR ALLEGATIONS OF RACIAL INEQUALITY (AND MADE FOR A MUCH EASIER PRODUCTION THAN MASKS, SINCE THE LOWER ARMS MERELY REQUIRED SOMETHING LONG AND SKINNY).

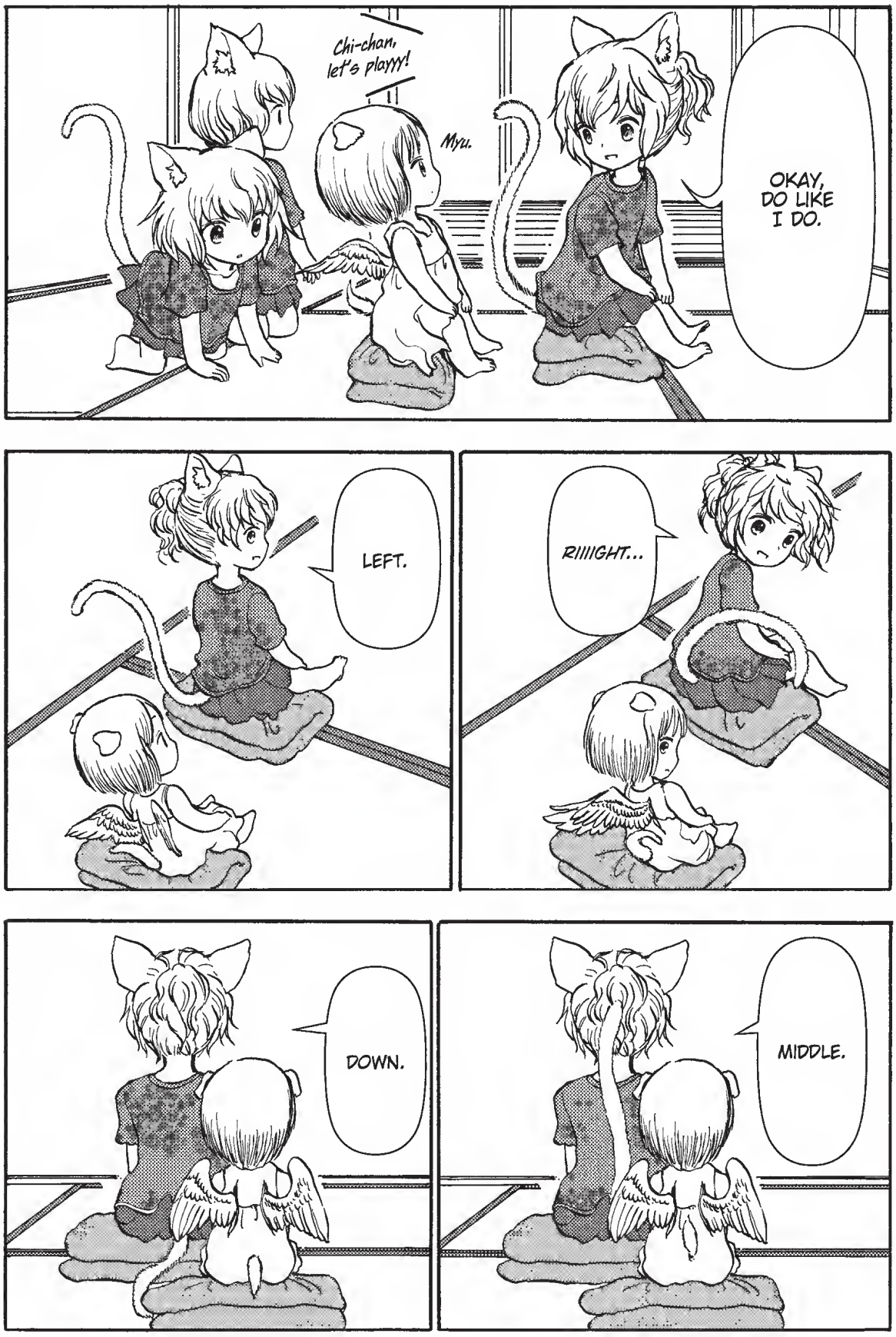
ON TOP OF THIS, THE SERIES' PROMOTION OF RUNNING AND EXERCISE ADDRESSED CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OVER CHILDREN'S DECLINING FITNESS, EARNING IT A SPOT ON THEIR RECOMMENDED VIEWING LIST. THIS GREATLY AIDED THE SHOW IN AVOIDING FRICTION WITH GROUPS WHO VIEWED THE SPECIAL EFFECTS DRAMA, OR *TOKUSATSU*, GENRE AS TRASHY.

THE SERIES WAS VERY POPULAR, RESULTING IN A NUMBER OF SEQUEL SERIES.

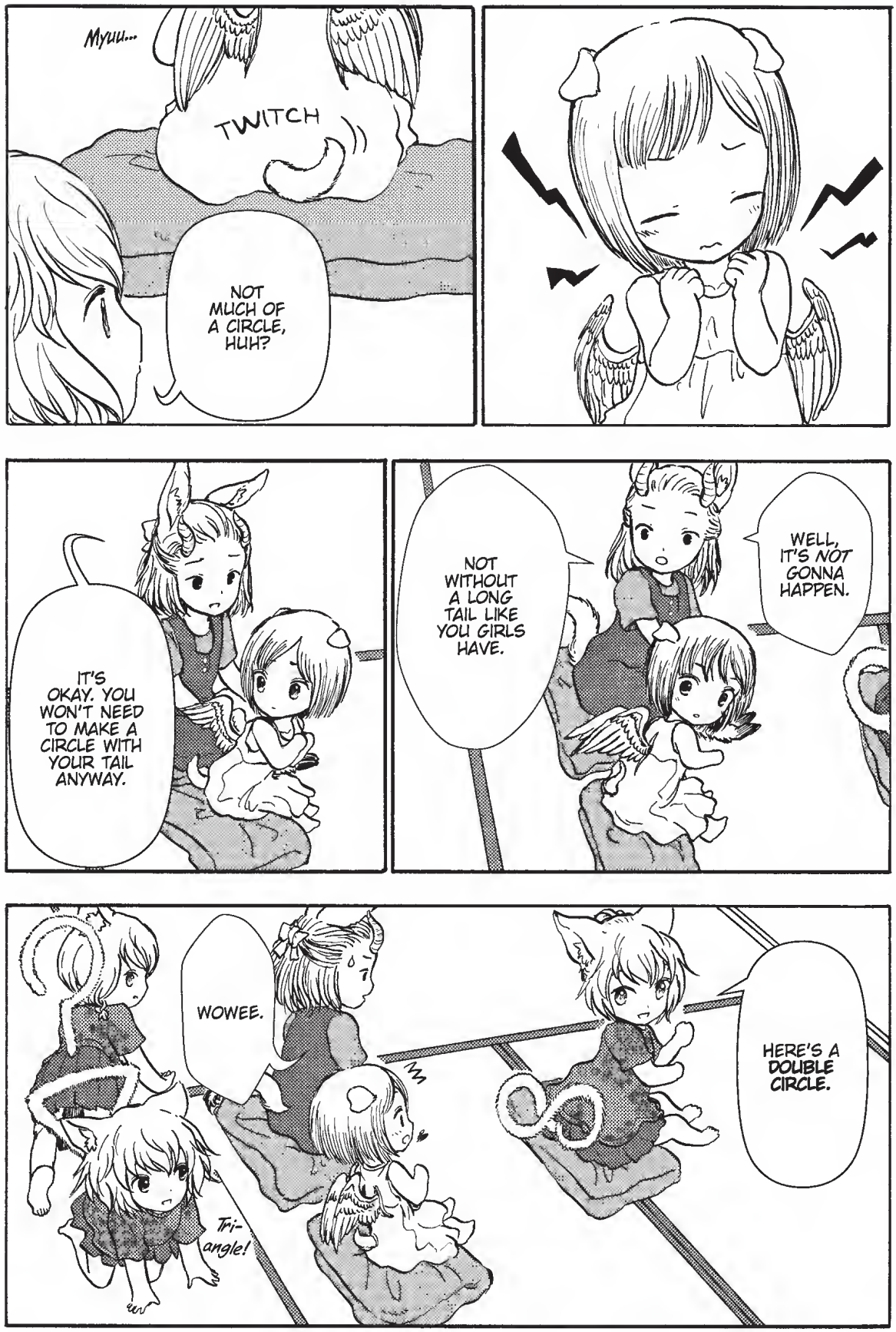

RUFFLE
RUFFLE
FINISHED GETTING DRESSED, SUE-CHAN?

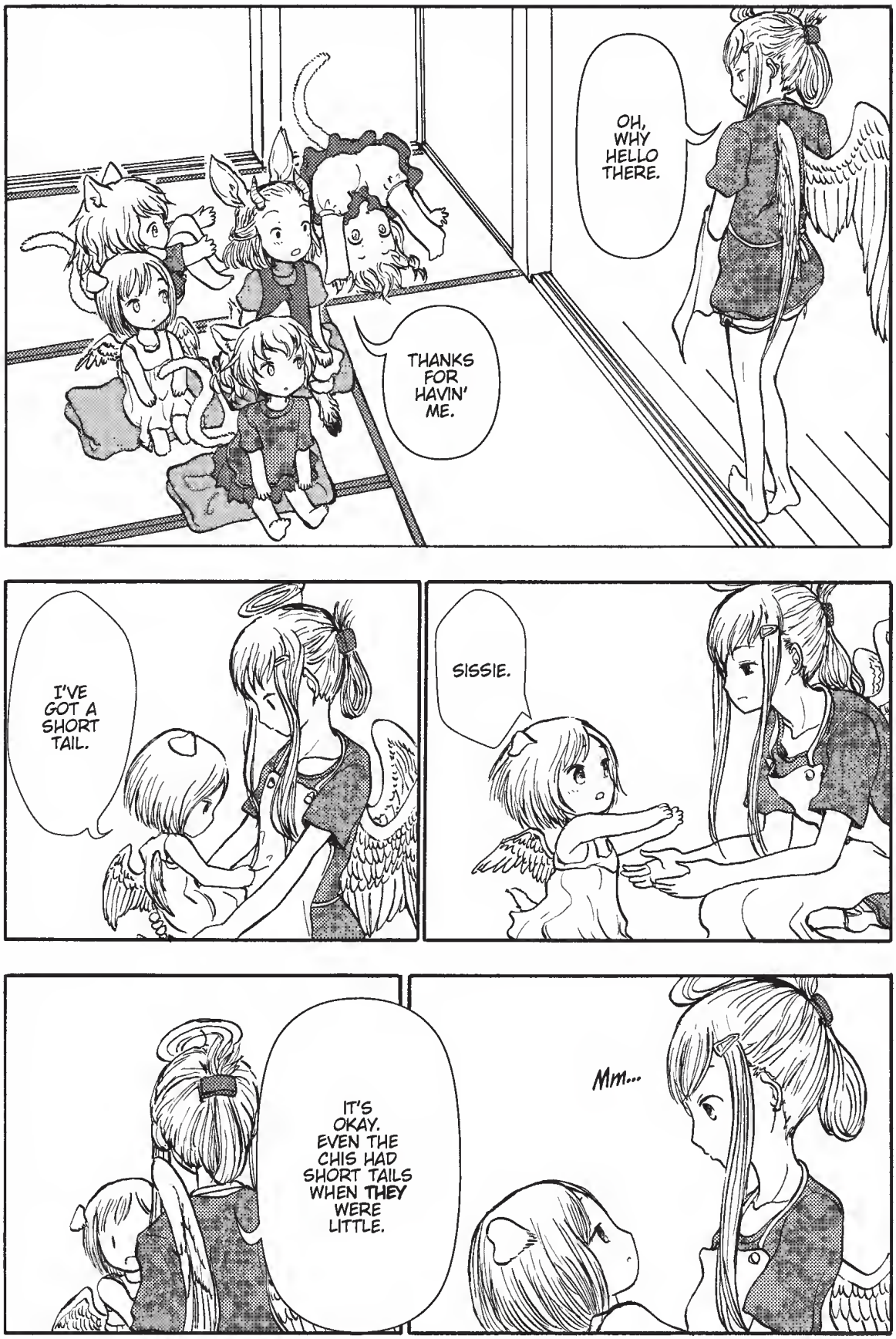
CHAPTER 57

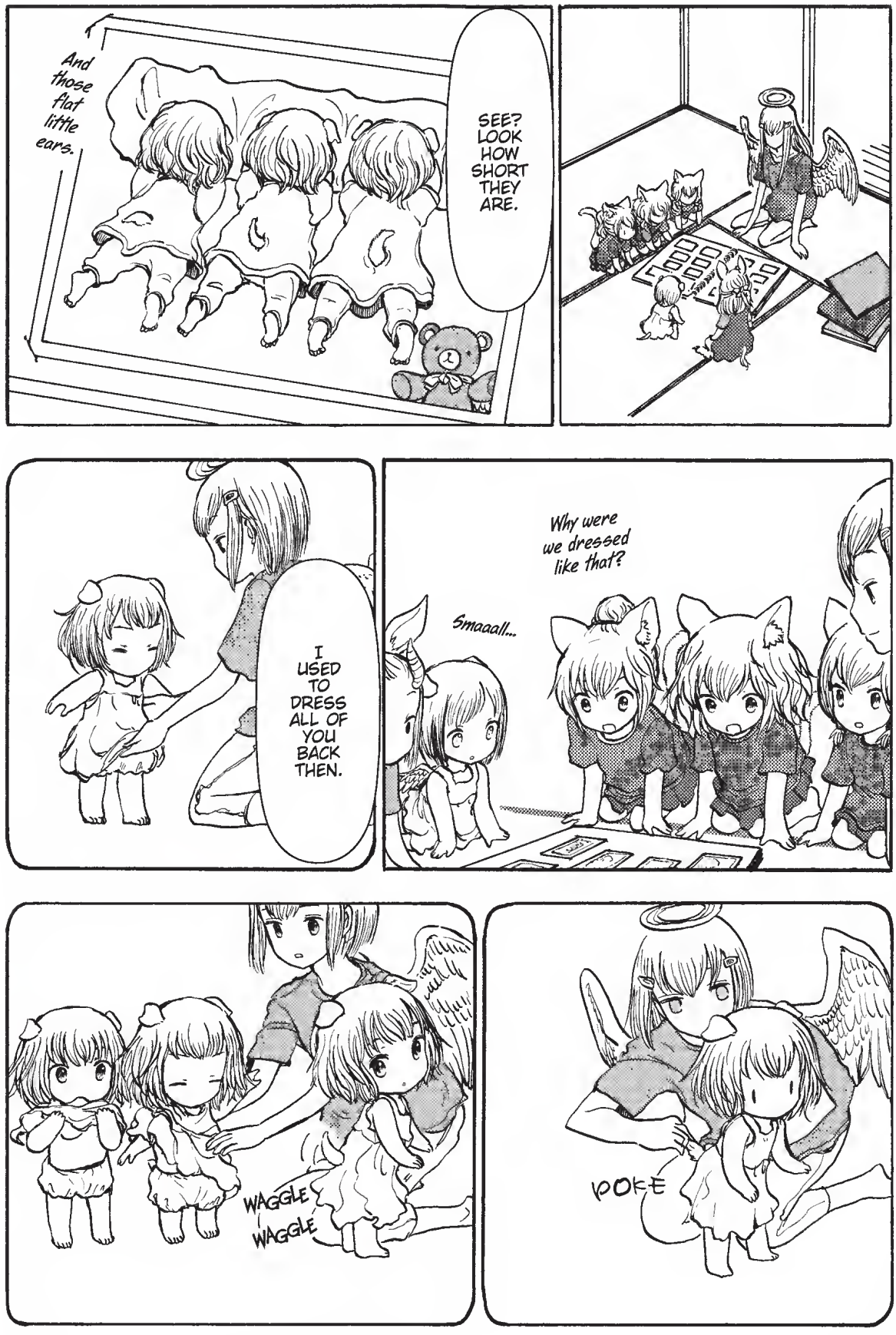
Sue-chan, ya finished changing?
I WANTED TO GET DRESSED ALL BY MYSELF.
WAGGLE
WAGGLE
Myuuu...
SHE COULDN'T GET HER TAIL OUT.
WHAT'S WRONG?
LESSON?
I KNOW! TODAY, WE'LL HAVE A TAIL LESSON!


Chi-chan, let's playyy!
Myu.
OKAY, DO LIKE I DO.
LEFT.
RIIIIGHT...
DOWN.
MIDDLE.

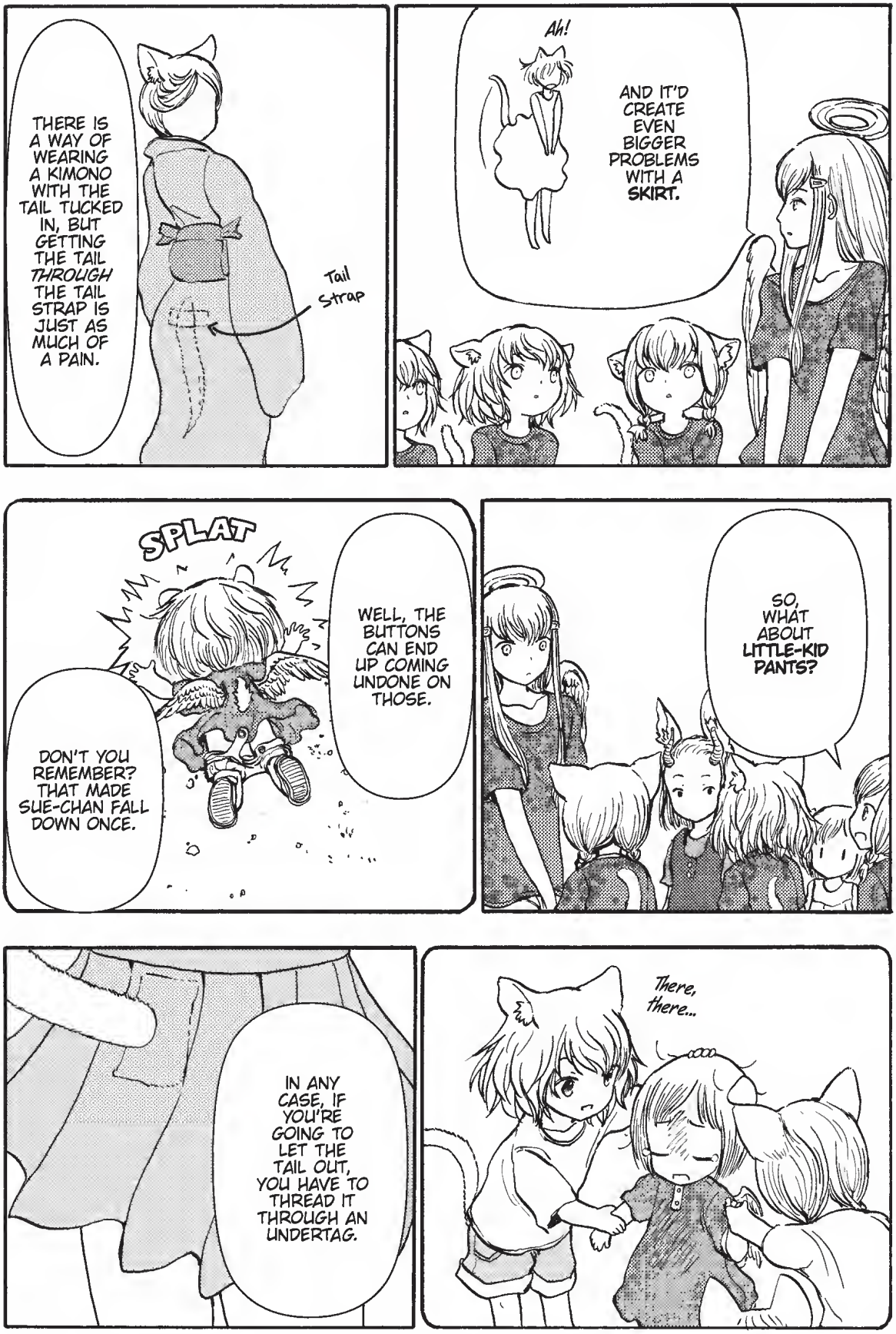
STUDYIN'? GOOD FOR YOU!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
TAIL PRACTICE.
You wanna do it too, Riri-chan?
Huh? What do I do?
Well...
START WITH YOUR TAIL ON THE RIGHT...
Wah?!
AND MAKE A CIRCLE.
Wha?! A circle?!

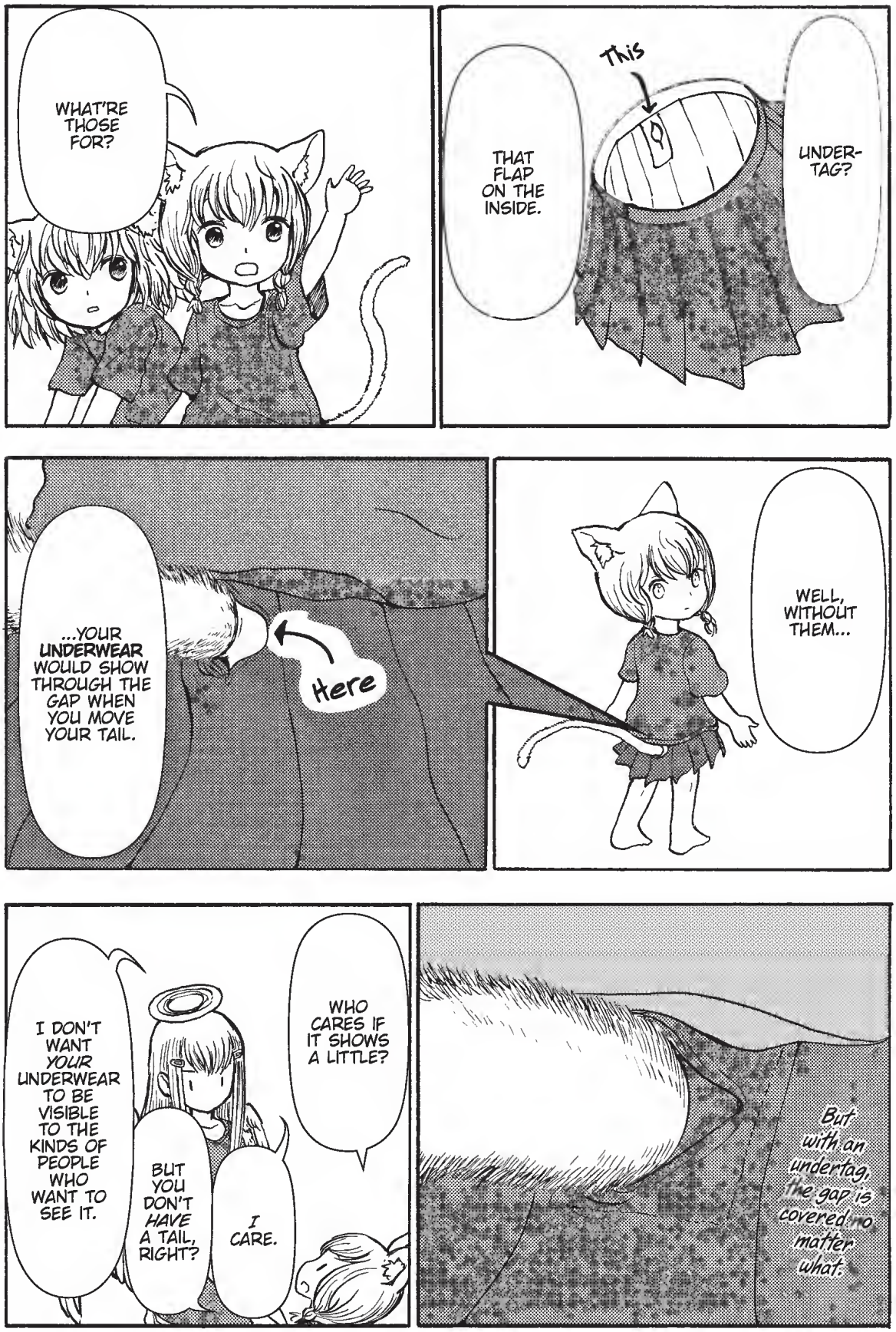

Myuu...
TWITCH
NOT MUCH OF A CIRCLE, HUH?
IT'S OKAY. YOU WON'T NEED TO MAKE A CIRCLE WITH YOUR TAIL ANYWAY.
NOT WITHOUT A LONG TAIL LIKE YOU GIRLS HAVE.
WELL, IT'S *NOT* GONNA HAPPEN.
WOWEE.
Tri-angle!
HERE'S A DOUBLE CIRCLE.

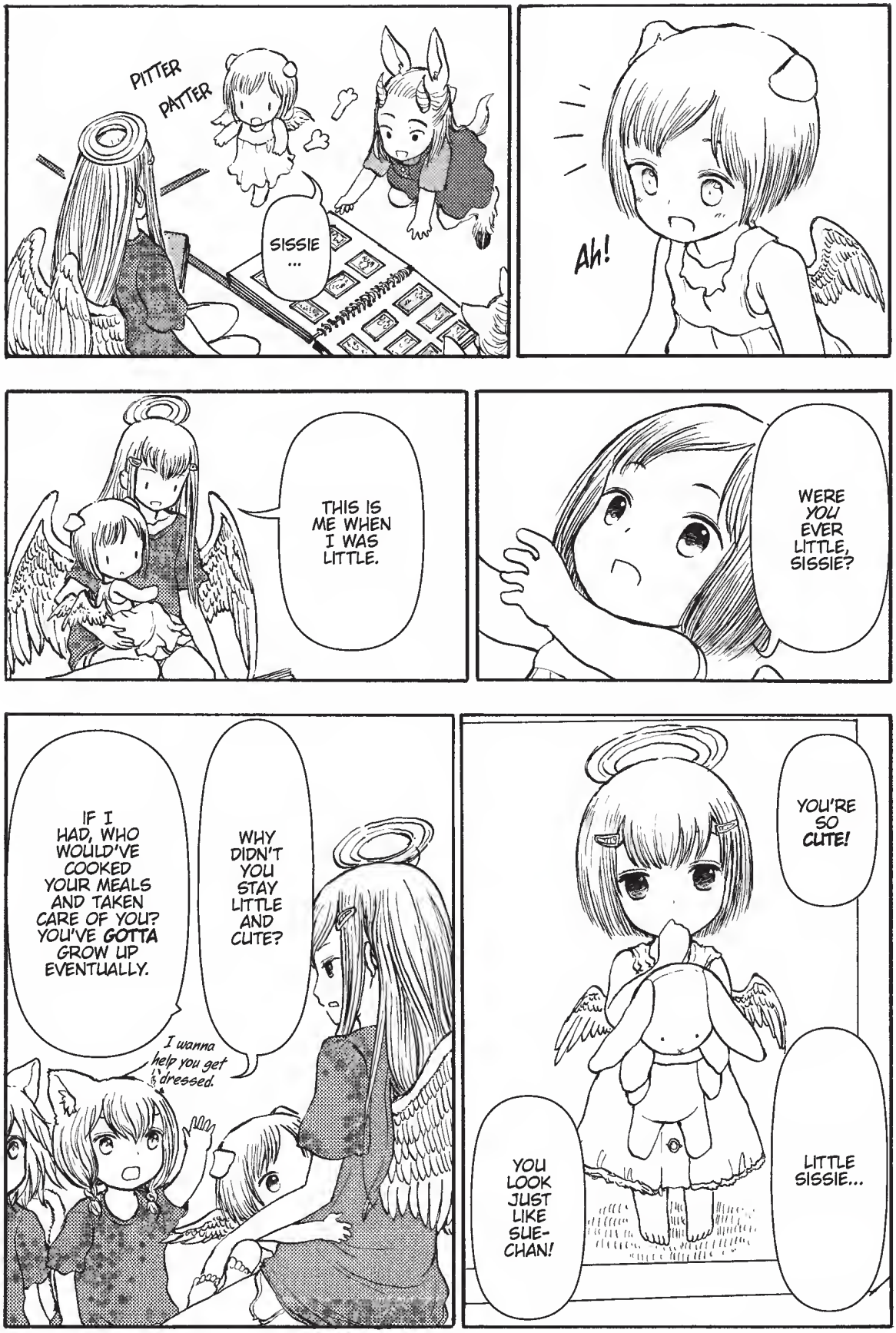

OH, WHY HELLO THERE.
THANKS FOR HAVIN' ME.
I'VE GOT A SHORT TAIL.
SISSIE.
IT'S OKAY. EVEN THE CHIS HAD SHORT TAILS WHEN THEY WERE LITTLE.
Mm...


And those flat little ears.
SEE? LOOK HOW SHORT THEY ARE.
I USED TO DRESS ALL OF YOU BACK THEN.
Why were we dressed like that?
Smaaall...
WAGGLE WAGGLE
POKE

LITTLE-KID PANTS
Button can be fastened above tail.
WOULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN EASIER TO JUST PUT US IN LITTLE-KID PANTS?
BUT WAIT.
THAT OR JUST KEEP IT TUCKED IN.
Another layer underneath that's only fixed on one side.
WITH NORMAL PANTS OR A SKIRT, THE TAIL HAS TO PASS THROUGH TWO HOLES.
BULGE
EH, BUT KEEPING IT TUCKED INTO PANTS...


THERE IS A WAY OF WEARING A KIMONO WITH THE TAIL TUCKED IN, BUT GETTING THE TAIL *THROUGH* THE TAIL STRAP IS JUST AS MUCH OF A PAIN.
Tail Strap
Ah!
AND IT'D CREATE EVEN BIGGER PROBLEMS WITH A **SKIRT.**
SPLAT
WELL, THE BUTTONS CAN END UP COMING UNDONE ON THOSE.
DON'T YOU REMEMBER? THAT MADE SUE-CHAN FALL DOWN ONCE.
SO, WHAT ABOUT **LITTLE-KID PANTS?**
IN ANY CASE, IF YOU'RE GOING TO LET THE TAIL OUT, YOU HAVE TO THREAD IT THROUGH AN UNDERTAG.
There, there...


WHAT'RE THOSE FOR?
This
THAT FLAP ON THE INSIDE.
UNDER-TAG?
...YOUR UNDERWEAR WOULD SHOW THROUGH THE GAP WHEN YOU MOVE YOUR TAIL.
Here
WELL, WITHOUT THEM...
I DON'T WANT YOUR UNDERWEAR TO BE VISIBLE TO THE KINDS OF PEOPLE WHO WANT TO SEE IT.
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE A TAIL, RIGHT?
I CARE.
WHO CARES IF IT SHOWS A LITTLE?
But with an undertag, the gap is covered no matter what.

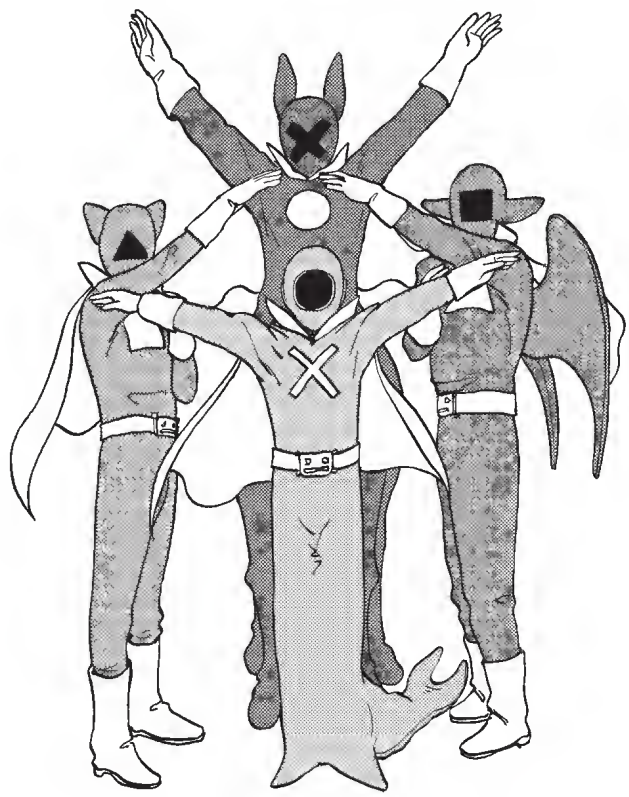

PITTER PATTER
SISSIE ...
Ah!
THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
WERE YOU EVER LITTLE, SISSIE?
IF I HAD, WHO WOULD'VE COOKED YOUR MEALS AND TAKEN CARE OF YOU? YOU'VE GOTTA GROW UP EVENTUALLY.
WHY DIDN'T YOU STAY LITTLE AND CUTE?
I wanna help you get dressed.
YOU'RE SO CUTE!
LITTLE SISSIE...
YOU LOOK JUST LIKE SUE-CHAN!

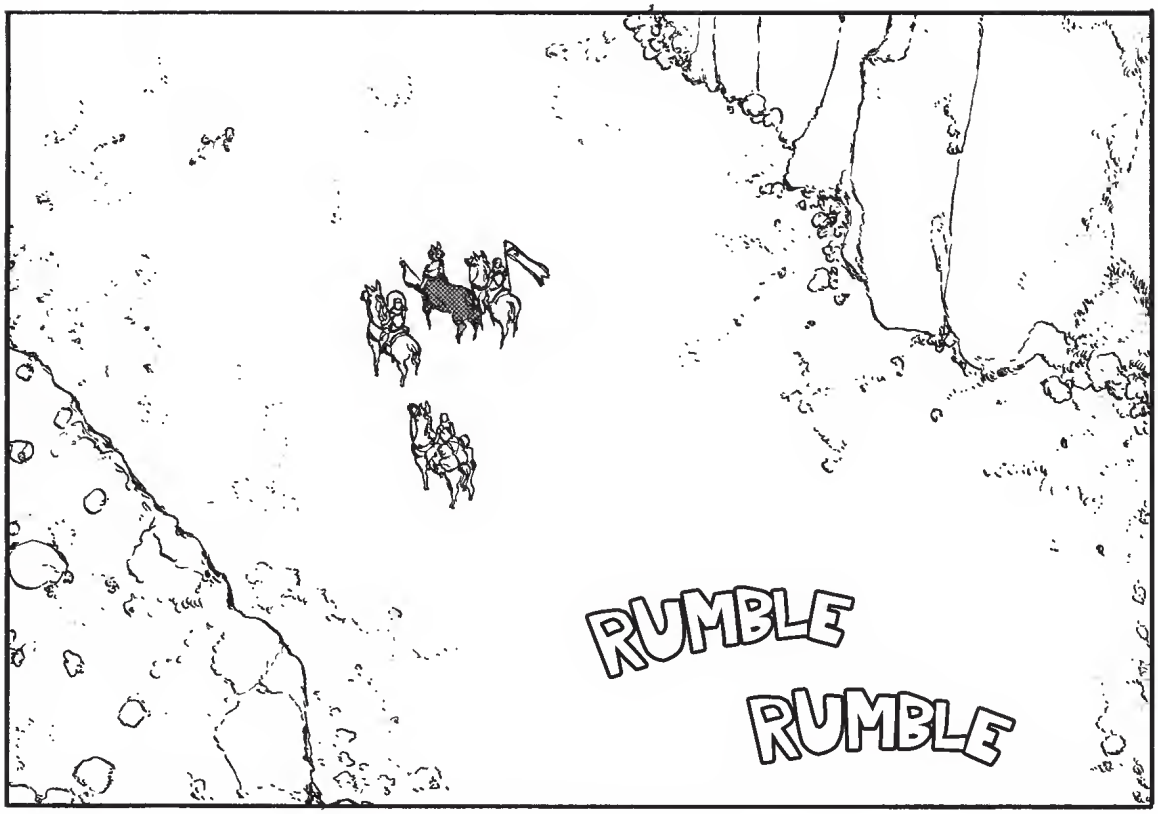
A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD:
FOUR RANGERS

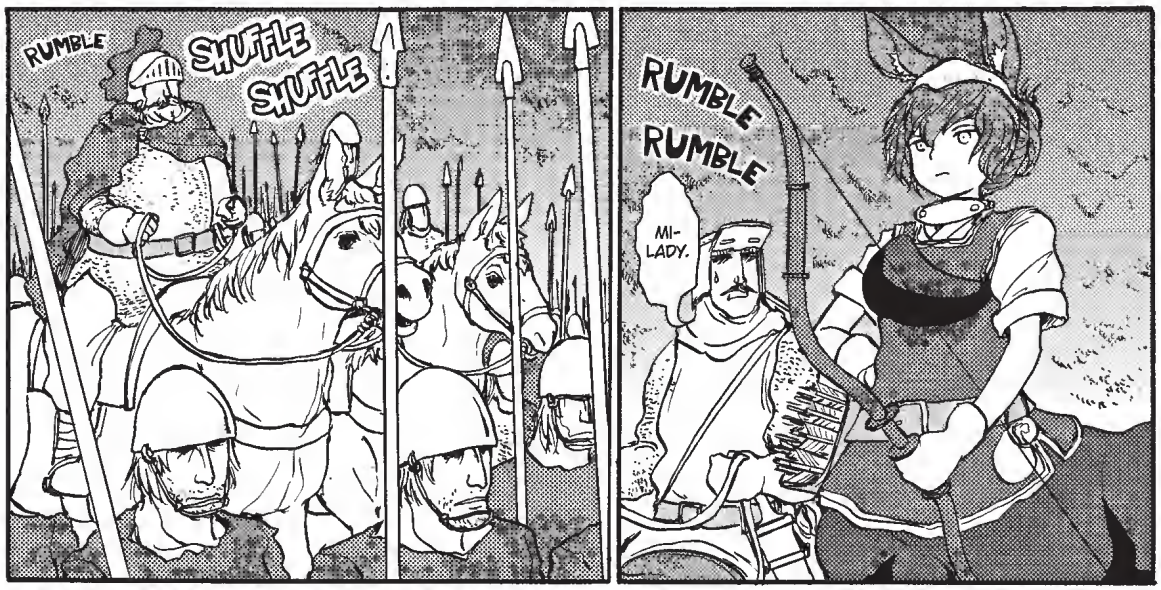
THIS WORK COULD ACCURATELY BE CREDITED AS THE GENESIS OF THE HERO SQUAD, OR *SENTAI*, GENRE. THE SERIES PIONEERED THE CONCEPT OF MULTIPLE PROTAGONISTS, EMPLOYING FOUR DIFFERENT HEROES REPRESENTING THE FOUR RACES CLASSIFIED AT THE TIME: AN ANGELFOLK/DRACONID, A CATFOLK/FAUN/GOATFOLK, A CENTAUR, AND A MERFOLK. MOREOVER, THIS TEAM HAD NO "LEADER", AND INSTEAD ALL DECISIONS WERE MADE VIA DEMOCRATIC CONSENSUS. THIS ELEMENT PAVED THE WAY TO A NEW TYPE OF DRAMA NEVER BEFORE SEEN IN A CHILDREN'S ACTION SERIES, AND GARNERED REMARKABLE SUPPORT FROM LEFT-WING ADULTS. AMONG THOSE LEFTISTS, HOWEVER, ONLY THE INDUSTRIAL COMMUNALIST PARTY (HEREAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE COMMUNALIST PARTY) HEAVILY CRITICIZED THE SERIES' FREQUENT EMPHASIS OF DEMOCRATIC CONSENSUS, INSTEAD CONTINUALLY PREACHING THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PARTY'S OWN STANCE OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM.

ULTIMATELY, THE SERIES WAS A SUCCESS, LEADING TO THE CREATION OF FUTURE *SENTAI* SERIES.




RUMBLE
RUMBLE

CHAPTER 58

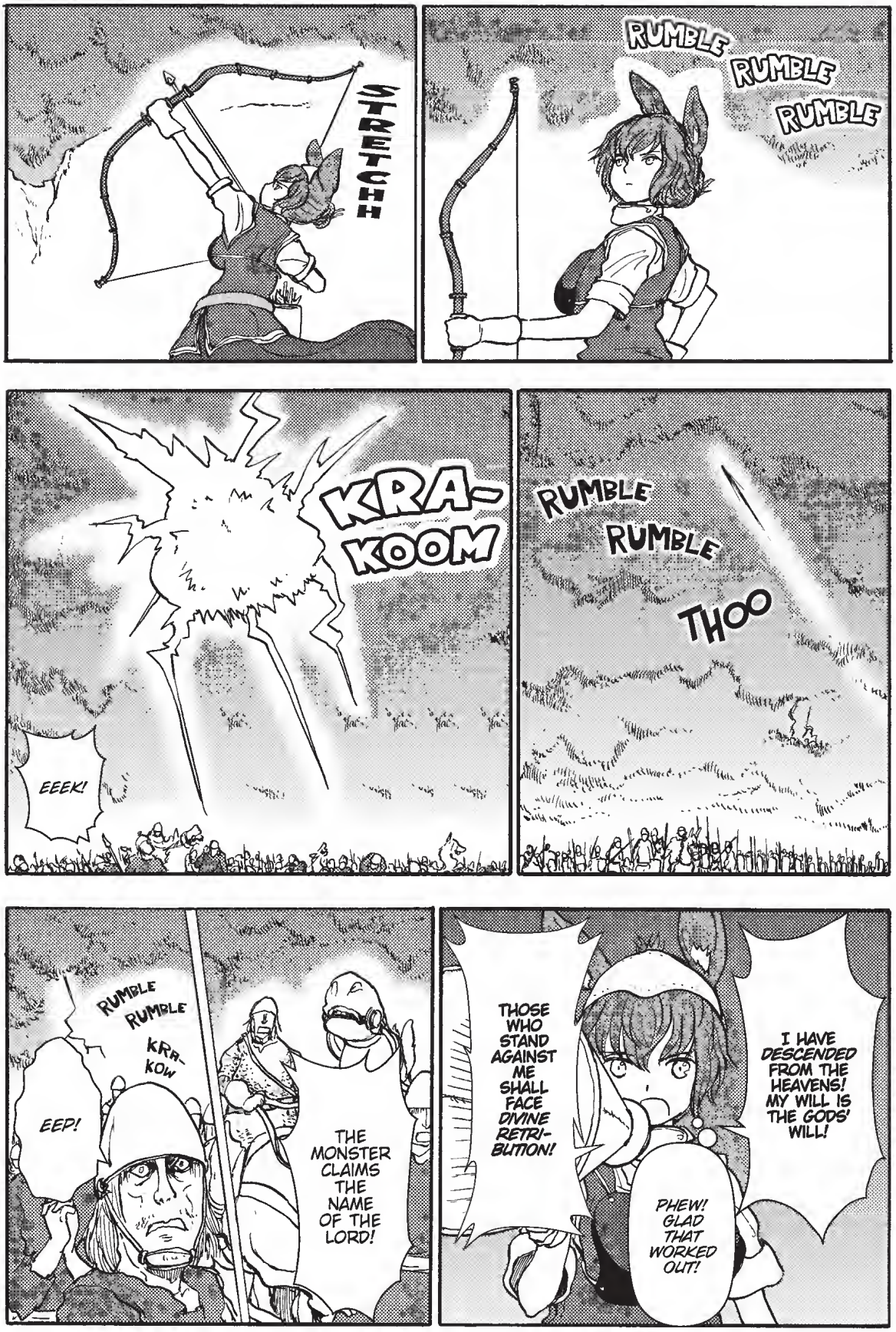

RUMBLE
SHUFFLE
SHUFFLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
MI-
LADY.

TRAMP
TRAMP

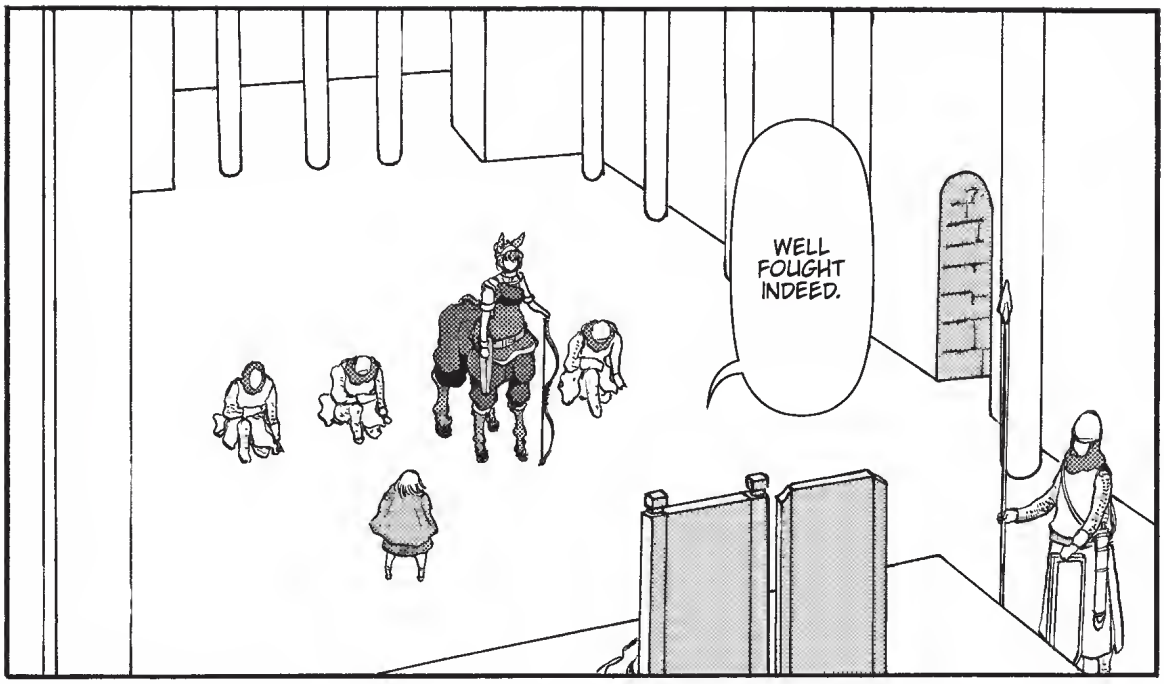
AND THEY BEAR ARMS, AT THAT.
AND YET, THEY DO NOT WAVE THE WHITE FLAG.
And what is that in the center...?
LIKELY, 'TIS AN ENVOY SENT FROM LOGAN.
WHAT IS THAT?
DOGS OF THE GLYCOL EMPIRE!
I SUGGEST YOU STAND DOWN AT ONCE!
'TIS A BOOMING VOICE!
MAGIC, PERHAPS?
RUMBLE
YOU ARE RECKONING WITH A GOD!

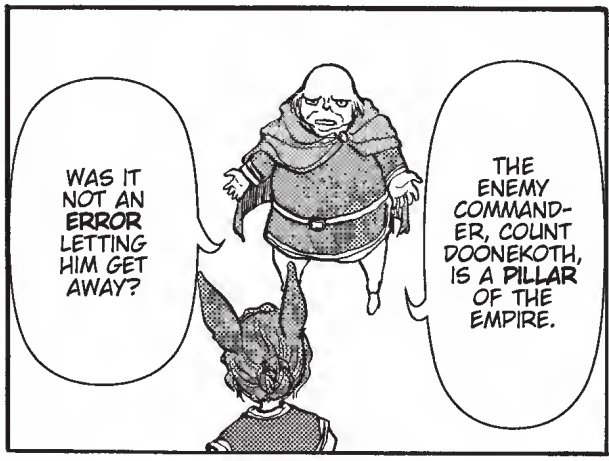
MILORD-- WHAT SAY YE?
HMPH! PAY NO MIND!
RUMBLE RUMBLE
HAD THEY COME BEGGING FOR PEACE, I MIGHT HAVE LET THEM SLIP BY, BUT THEY'VE COME BRANDISHING ARMS.
There he is.
AS TRUE WARRIORS, WE SHALL TAKE THEIR HEADS AND HURL THEM OVER THE LOGAN CASTLE WALLS!
ON-WARD!
THWOOSH
THUNDER
THUNDER
THUNDER
THUNDER

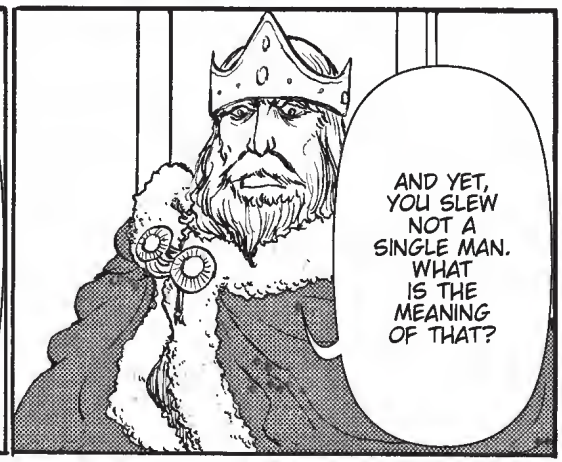
THWOK
SPIN
THWIP
RAHH! WE SHAN'T F--
WHAT ?!
Gather 'round our lord!!
'Tis magic after all!
It... can't be!
YOUR COMMANDER IS ALREADY IN MY SIGHTS!
'Tis stuck!
MY ARROWS ALWAYS STRIKE THEIR MARKS! OUR ENEMIES ARE AS GOOD AS DEAD!
WHA?! AT THIS DISTANCE?!
GA-SHAK
MILORD!


STRETCHH
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
KRA-
KOOM
EEEK!
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
THOO
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
KRA-
KOW
EEP!
THE MONSTER CLAIMS THE NAME OF THE LORD!
THOSE WHO STAND AGAINST ME SHALL FACE DIVINE RETRI-BUTION!
I HAVE DESCENDED FROM THE HEAVENS! MY WILL IS THE GODS' WILL!
PHEW! GLAD THAT WORKED OUT!

RUMBLE RUMBLE
KRA-FOOM
HEEELLP!
IT'S A MONSTER!
PEASANTS! CHAAAARGE!
DO NOT THINK THAT THE BRAVE SOLDIERS OF GLYCOL WILL FALL BACK SO EASILY!
KAAAANNNG
HALT, COWARDS!!
NO, DON'T RUN!
RE-TREAT!
THEY'VE TAKEN MILORD!


WELL FOUGHT INDEED.

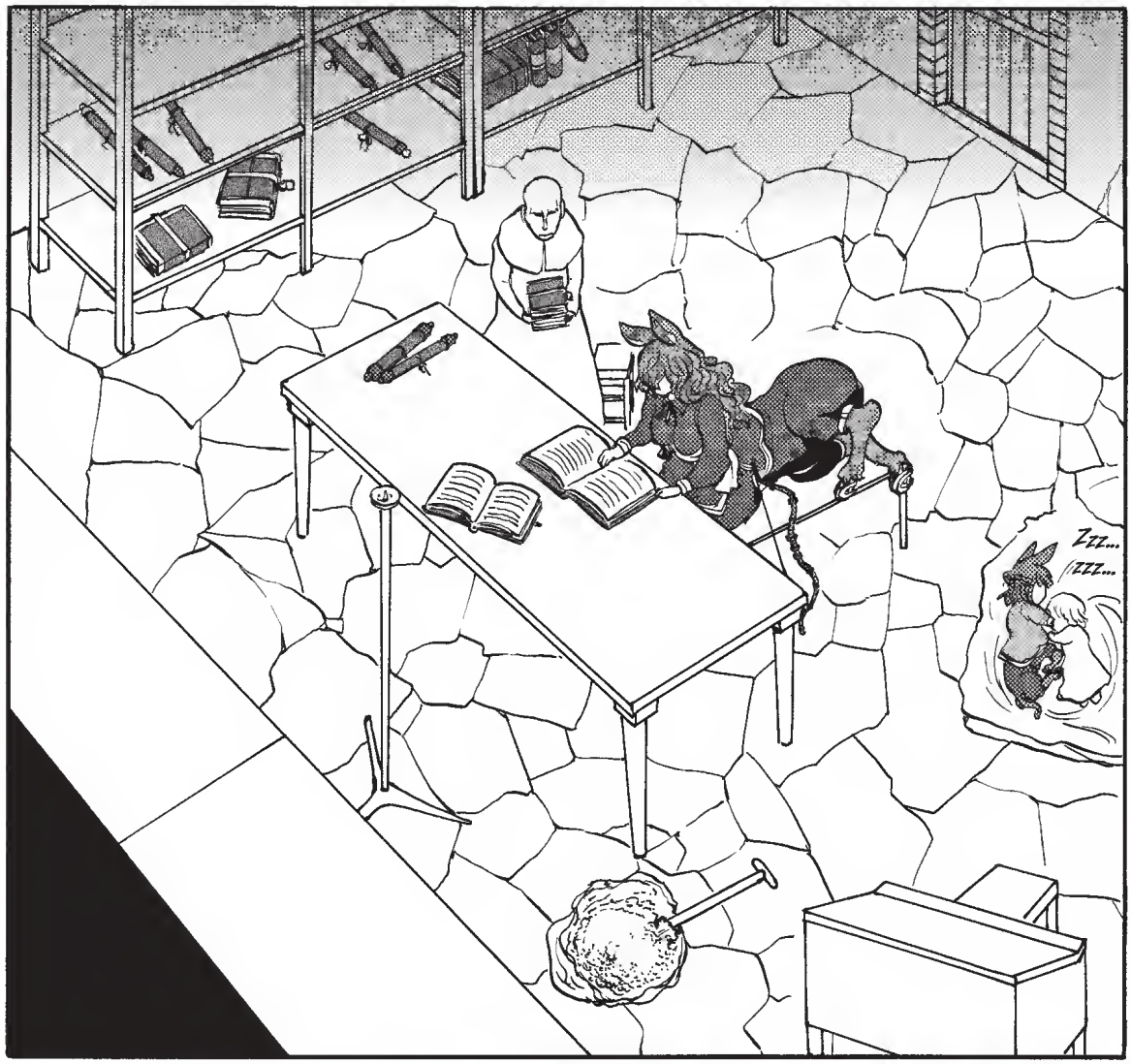

WAS IT NOT AN ERROR LETTING HIM GET AWAY?
THE ENEMY COMMAND-ER, COUNT DOONEKOTH, IS A PILLAR OF THE EMPIRE.


AND YET, YOU SLEW NOT A SINGLE MAN. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THAT?

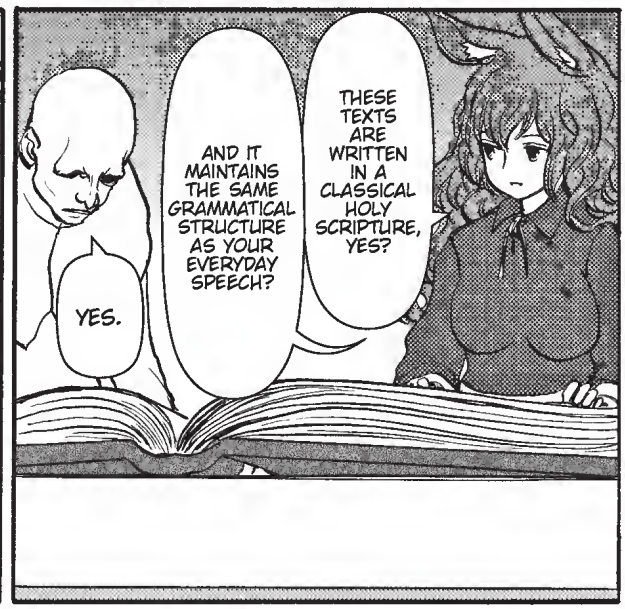
BETTER TO LET THEM RETURN AND SPREAD WORD OF MY DREAD ARROW.
BUT I CAN DO THAT ANY TIME I LIKE.

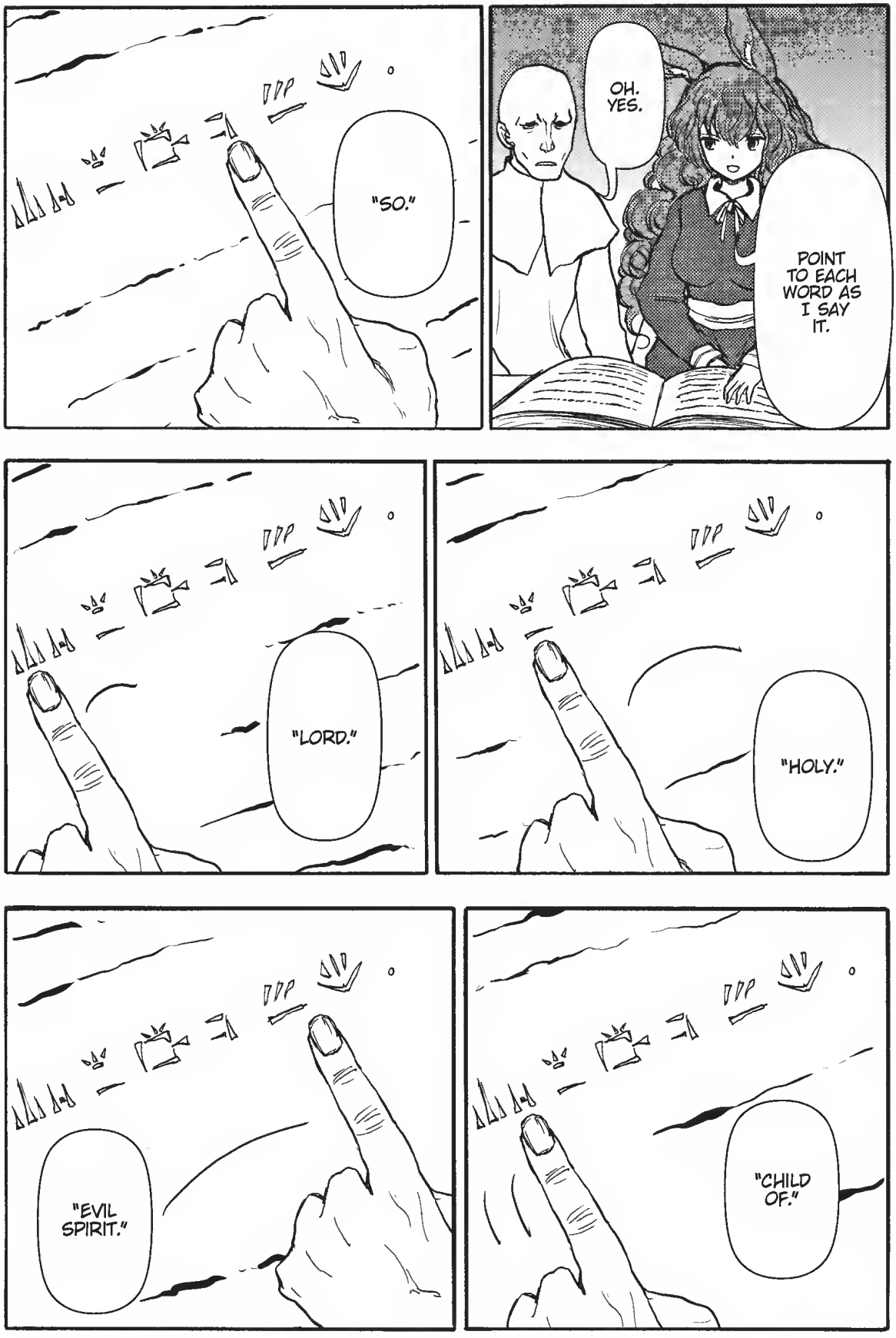
IF I HAD WANTED TO, I COULD HAVE KILLED EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM.

IF THIS WORD SPREADS THROUGHOUT THE OTHER KINGDOMS, NONE SHALL DARE LAY SIEGE UPON YOURS.
THAT'S ONE LESS WORRY FOR YOU.
HAD I KILLED THEM ALL, THERE WOULD BE NONE TO TELL THE TALE. LEAVE ONE SURVIVOR, AND YOU'VE ONLY ONE MOUTH.
A THOUSAND MOUTHS, HOWEVER, SHALL SPREAD THE WORD OF MY DIVINE MIGHT TO A THOUSAND PEOPLE--TEN THOUSAND MOUTHS TO TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE.
Were you a good girl?
I SAY, THIS INTER-RUPTION IS MOST IRREGULA--
YOUNG MISS, YOU MUSTN'T--!
SISSIE!
SCAMPER
NOW THEN, KING, MIGHT I REQUEST A REWARD?
Not worried about... but it's not your decree that...
I'M NOT WOR-RIED ABOUT IT.

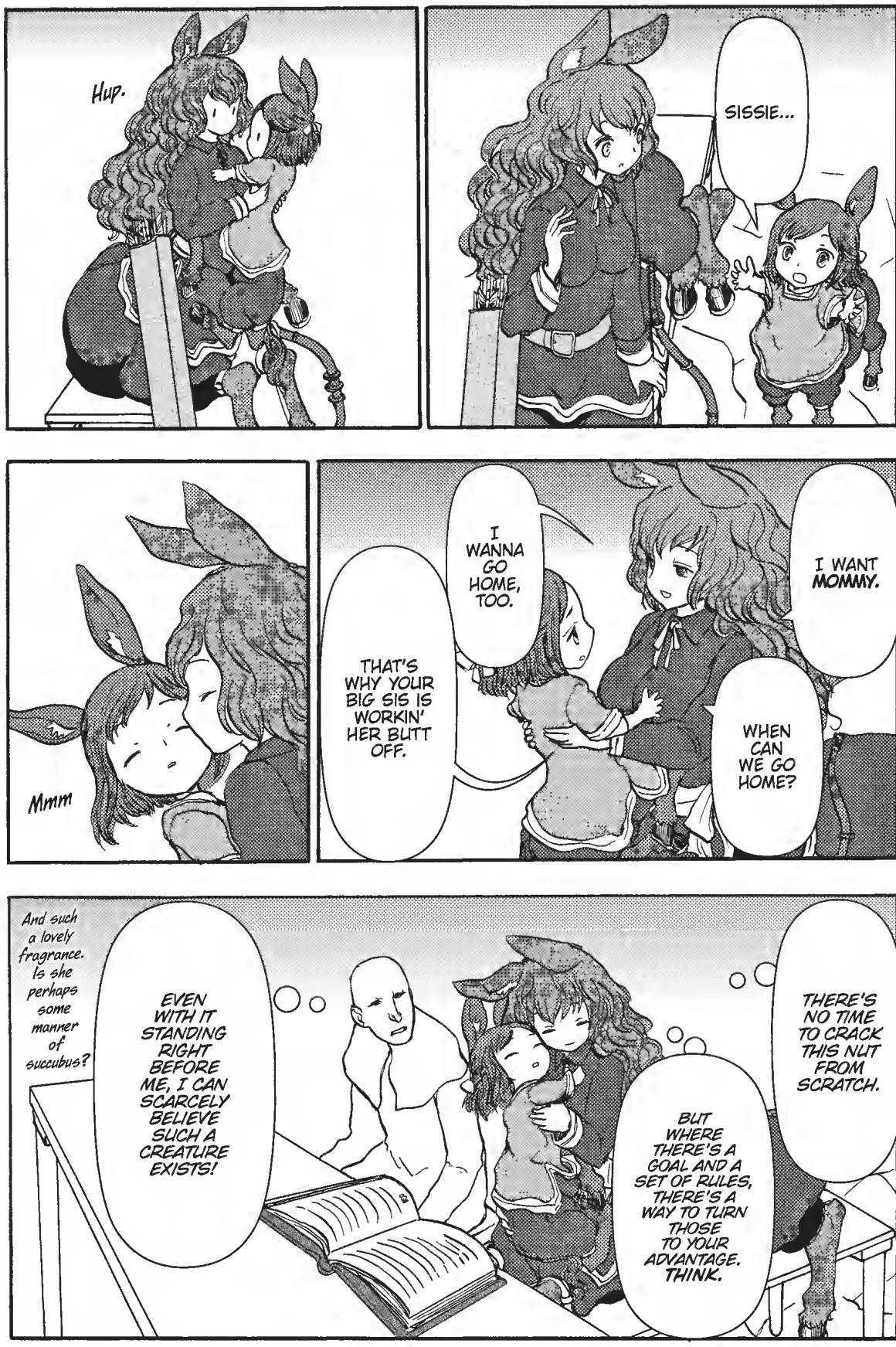

Zzz...
Zzz...

WHAT'S WRITTEN HERE?
"SO DID THE CHILD OF THE HOLY LORD SAY UNTO THE EVIL SPIRIT."

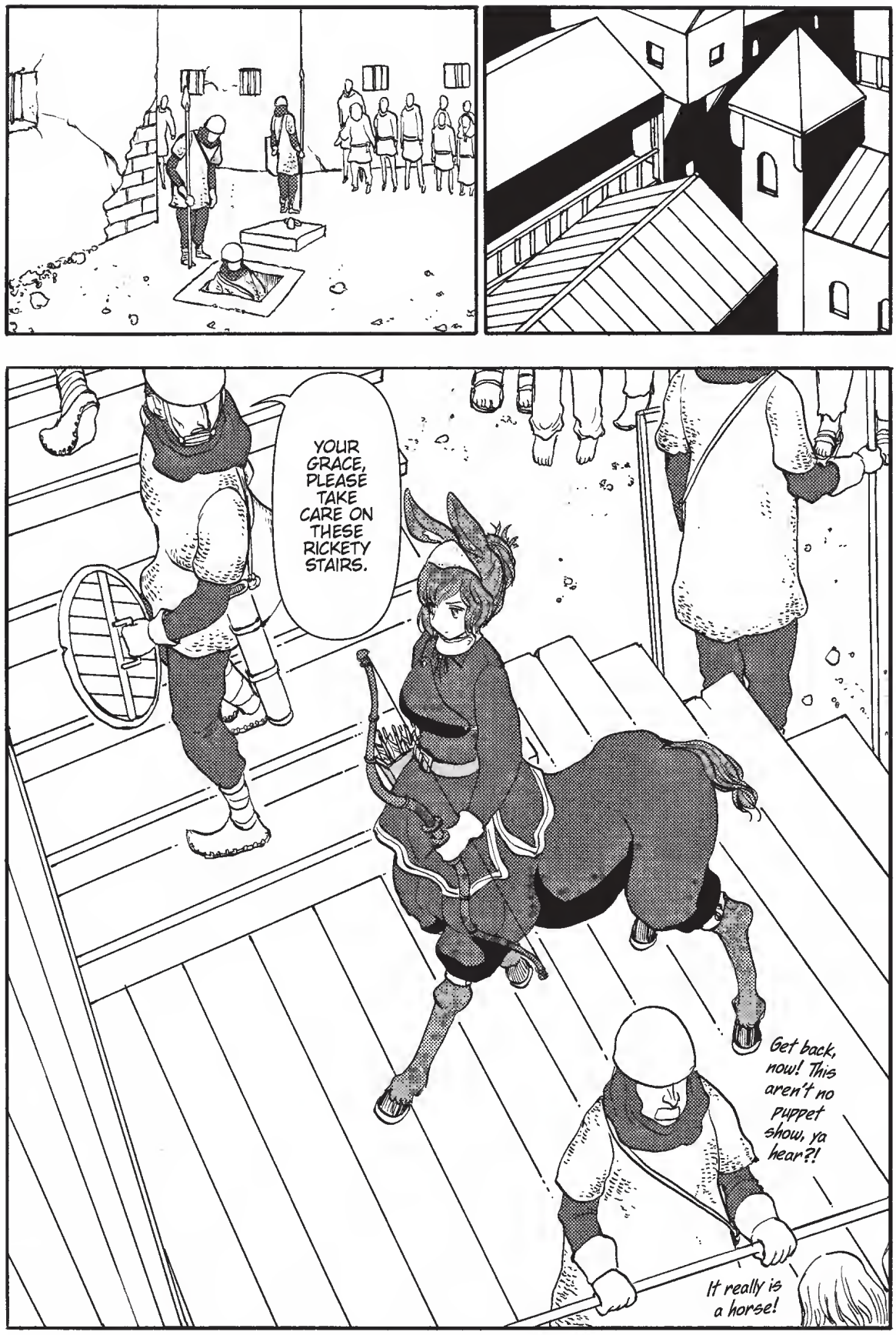

THESE TEXTS ARE WRITTEN IN A CLASSICAL HOLY SCRIPTURE, YES?
AND IT MAINTAINS THE SAME GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE AS YOUR EVERYDAY SPEECH?
YES.


"SO."
OH. YES.
POINT TO EACH WORD AS I SAY IT.
"LORD."
"HOLY."
"EVIL SPIRIT."
"CHILD OF."

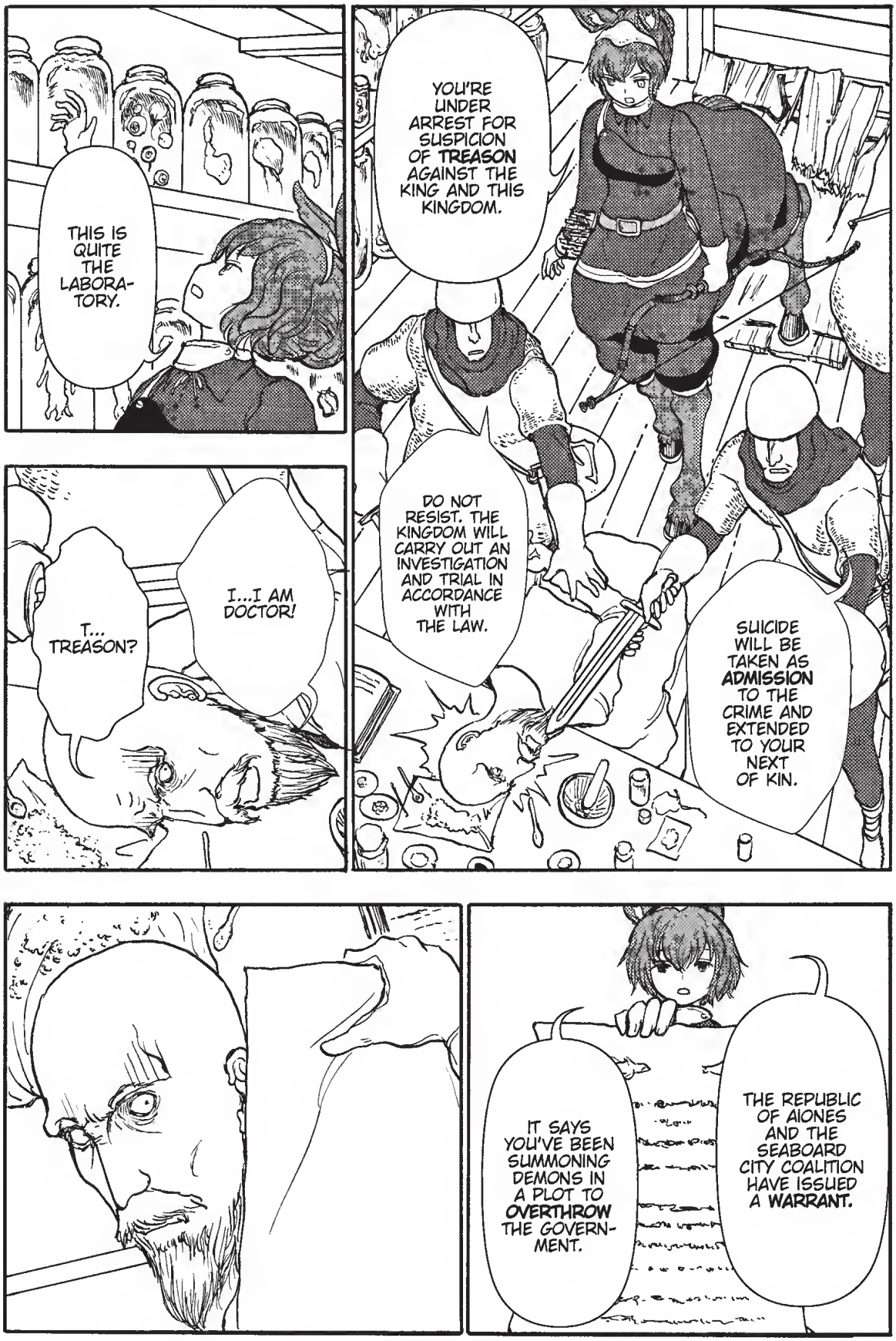
I'M HEARING THE WORDS IN A DIFFERENT ORDER.
THEY DON'T EVEN SEEM TO HAVE THAT PREPO-SITION.
PRITHEE, ONCE AGAIN?
"UNTO."
I GUESS IT WAS FAR-FETCHED THAT THEIR LANGUAGE WOULD MATCH UP PERFECTLY WITH JAPANESE.
IT'S NOT EVEN IN THE SAME LAN-GUAGE FAMILY.
SO I'M HEARING THE WORDS TRANS-LATED.
THAT MEANS THERE'S SOME KIND OF HUMAN INTER-VENTION AT WORK.
COULD THIS BE SOME KIND OF VIRTUAL REALITY?
I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO POINT WONDERING ABOUT IT. REGARDLESS, THERE'S NO WAY TO FIND OUT WHILE I'M "STUCK IN THE WELL," SO TO SPEAK.
MILADY?


Hup.
SISSIE...
Mmm
I WANNA GO HOME, TOO.
I WANT MOMMY.
THAT'S WHY YOUR BIG SIS IS WORKIN' HER BUTT OFF.
WHEN CAN WE GO HOME?
And such a lovely fragrance. Is she perhaps some manner of succubus?
EVEN WITH IT STANDING RIGHT BEFORE ME, I CAN SCARCELY BELIEVE SUCH A CREATURE EXISTS!
BUT WHERE THERE'S A GOAL AND A SET OF RULES, THERE'S A WAY TO TURN THOSE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE. THINK.
THERE'S NO TIME TO CRACK THIS NUT FROM SCRATCH.

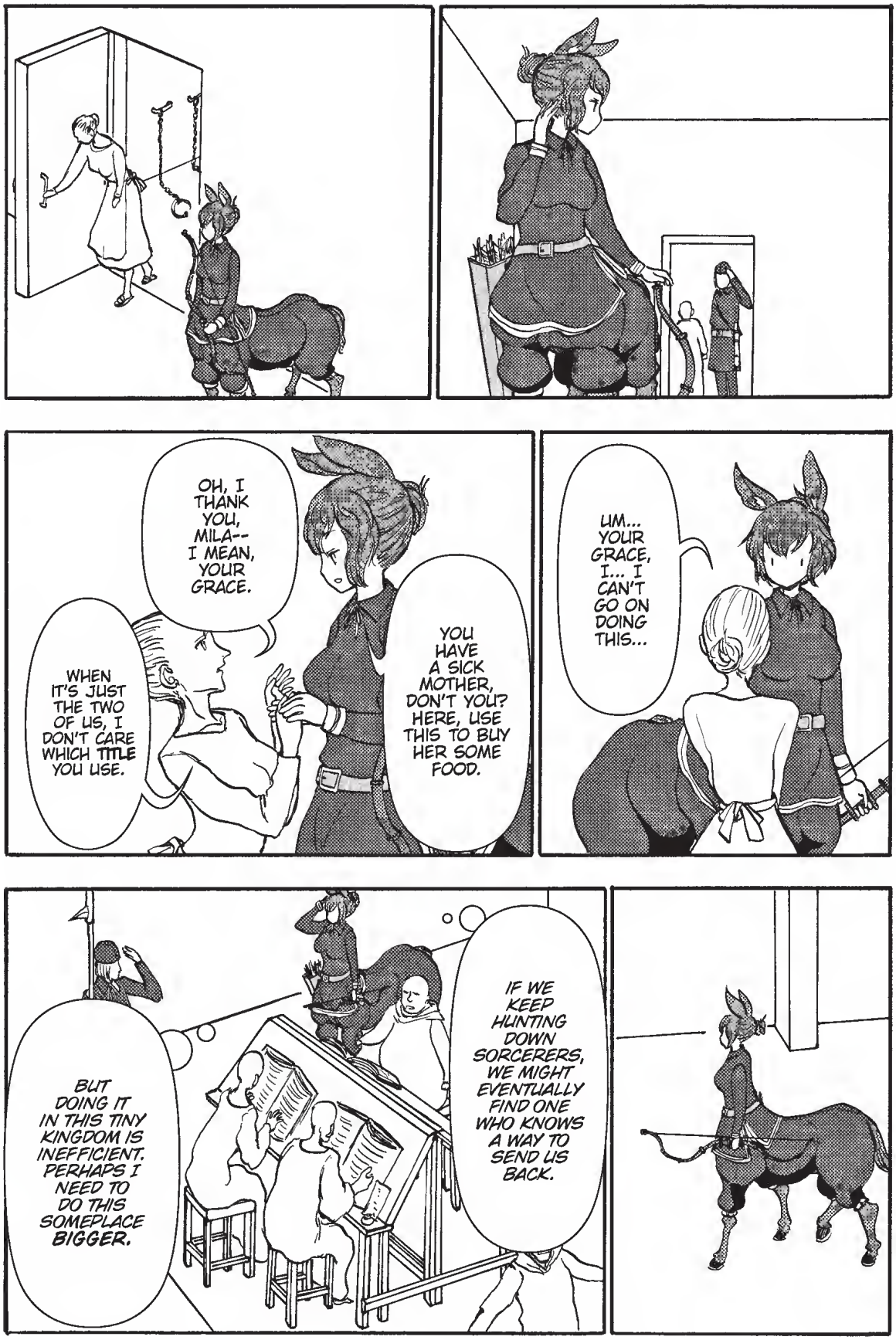
YOUR GRACE, THERE'S A MAN FROM THE INTERIOR HERE.
KLOP KLOP
CRE-A-K
YES?
WE'VE RECEIVED SECRET VITAL INFOR-MATION.
PRIEST, I MUST TAKE LEAVE FOR NOW. WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE IS **NOT** TO BE SHARED.
UNDER-STOOD.
IF HE GETS AWAY, IT COULD BECOME A NUISANCE LATER. SEND A SQUADRON TO **SEAL OFF** CITY ROADS AND UNDERGROUND WATERWAYS.
THERE'S A **SORCERER** HIDING AWAY AT THIS LOCATION.


YOUR GRACE, PLEASE TAKE CARE ON THESE RICKETY STAIRS.
Get back, now! This aren't no puppet show, ya hear?!
It really is a horse!

IF YOUR INFORMATION IS GOOD, I'LL PAY. WAIT THERE.
ALMS FOR THE POOR? HEH HEH...
KRESH
内
INTERIOR
FOLD YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD!
DON'T MOVE! WE ARE THE KNIGHTS OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY!


THIS IS QUITE THE LABORA-TORY.
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR SUSPICION OF **TREASON** AGAINST THE KING AND THIS KINGDOM.
DO NOT RESIST. THE KINGDOM WILL CARRY OUT AN INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW.
SUICIDE WILL BE TAKEN AS **ADMISSION** TO THE CRIME AND EXTENDED TO YOUR NEXT OF KIN.
T... TREASON?
I...I AM DOCTOR!
IT SAYS YOU'VE BEEN SUMMONING DEMONS IN A PLOT TO **OVERTHROW** THE GOVERN-MENT.
THE REPUBLIC OF AIONES AND THE SEABOARD CITY COALITION HAVE ISSUED A **WARRANT.**

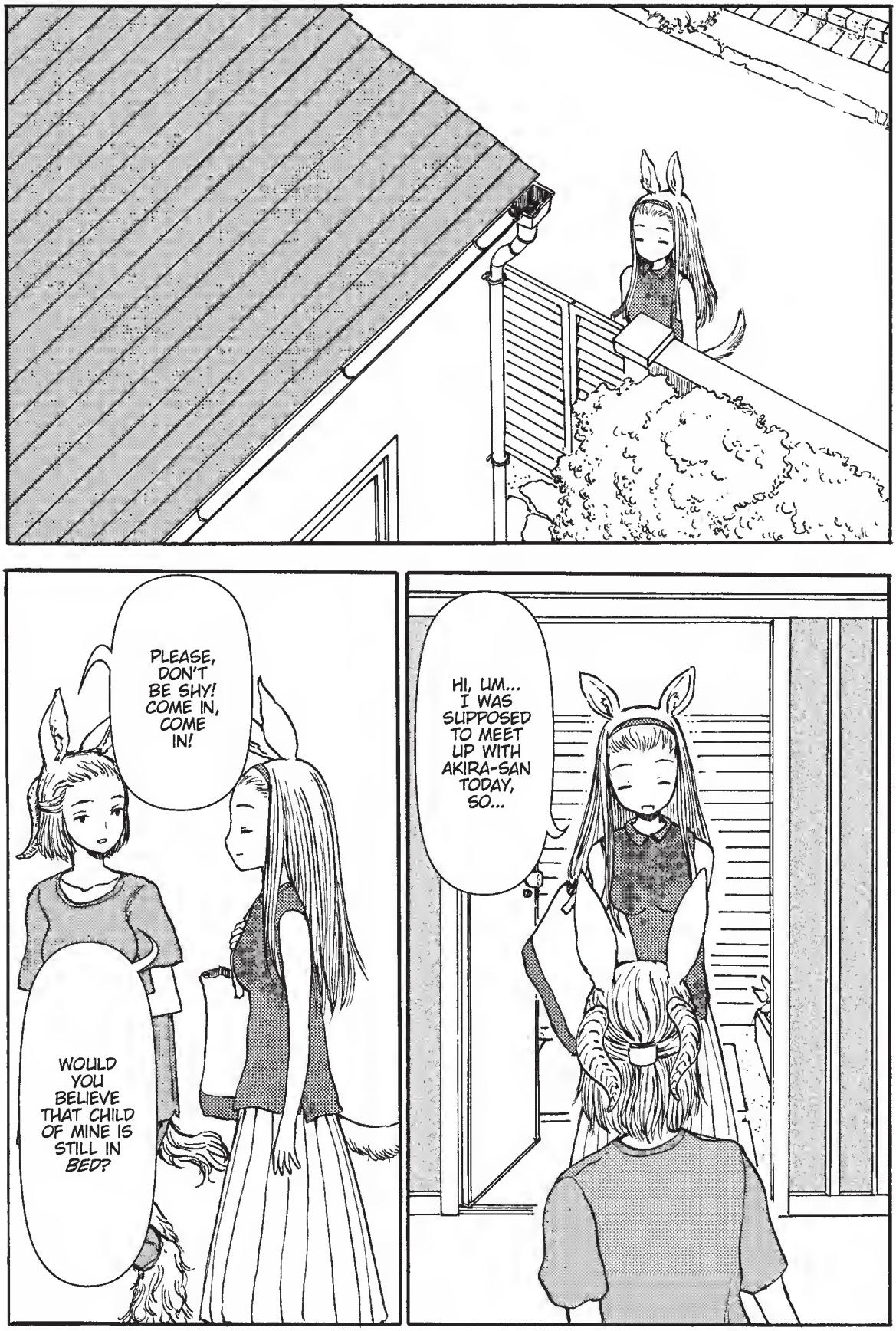
THE NAME WRITTEN HERE IS "ZENOTH OF DORTON."
I AM ZEMOTH OF BORTON.
THE CITY COUNCIL WILL CONFIRM.
THIS ISN'T ME.
TAKE HIM IN.
IT SEEMS YOU CAN READ WELL.
MAYBE HE'S A REAL DOCTOR.
I SEE.
YEOW!


UM... YOUR GRACE, I... I CAN'T GO ON DOING THIS...
YOU HAVE A SICK MOTHER, DON'T YOU? HERE, USE THIS TO BUY HER SOME FOOD.
OH, I THANK YOU, MILA-- I MEAN, YOUR GRACE.
WHEN IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US, I DON'T CARE WHICH TITLE YOU USE.
IF WE KEEP HUNTING DOWN SORCERERS, WE MIGHT EVENTUALLY FIND ONE WHO KNOWS A WAY TO SEND US BACK.
BUT DOING IT IN THIS TINY KINGDOM IS INEFFICIENT. PERHAPS I NEED TO DO THIS SOMEPLACE BIGGER.

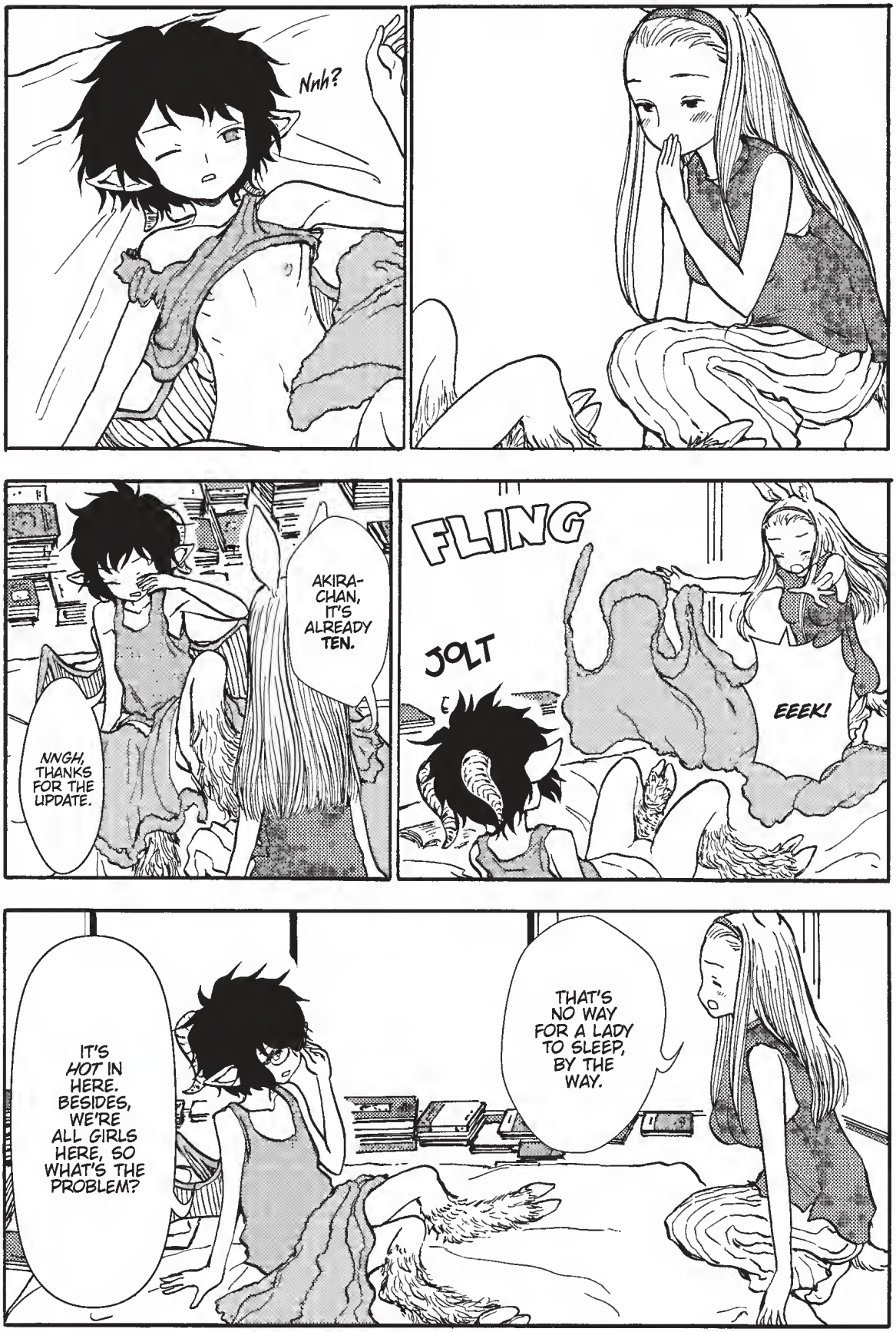
A CentaUr's Life

HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD:
MITHRA HUMAN

CARRYING ON THE LEGACY OF GIANT MONSTER, OR *KAIJU TOKUSATSU*, FILMS, MITHRA HUMAN TELLS THE ACTION SCI-FI TALE OF A GIANT HERO ENGAGED IN BATTLE WITH LIKEWISE GIANT MONSTERS AND SPACE CREATURES. IT BECKONED PRAISE FOR ITS USE OF INTRICATE MINIATURES IN EVERY EPISODE AND SUPERIOR MONSTER AND ALIEN DESIGNS. THE SCULPTING OF THE HERO, BASED ON AN AMIDA BUDDHA MOTIF, COMBINED TRAITS OF MULTIPLE RACES, AS IS OFTEN SEEN IN HOLY IMAGERY. THE ORIGINAL WORK WAS A SUCCESS, LEADING TO PERIODIC SUBSEQUENT SERIES, ALL THE WAY UP TO THE PRESENT DAY.


HI, UM... I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET UP WITH AKIRA-SAN TODAY, SO...
PLEASE, DON'T BE SHY! COME IN, COME IN!
WOULD YOU BELIEVE THAT CHILD OF MINE IS STILL IN *BED*?

CHAPTER 59

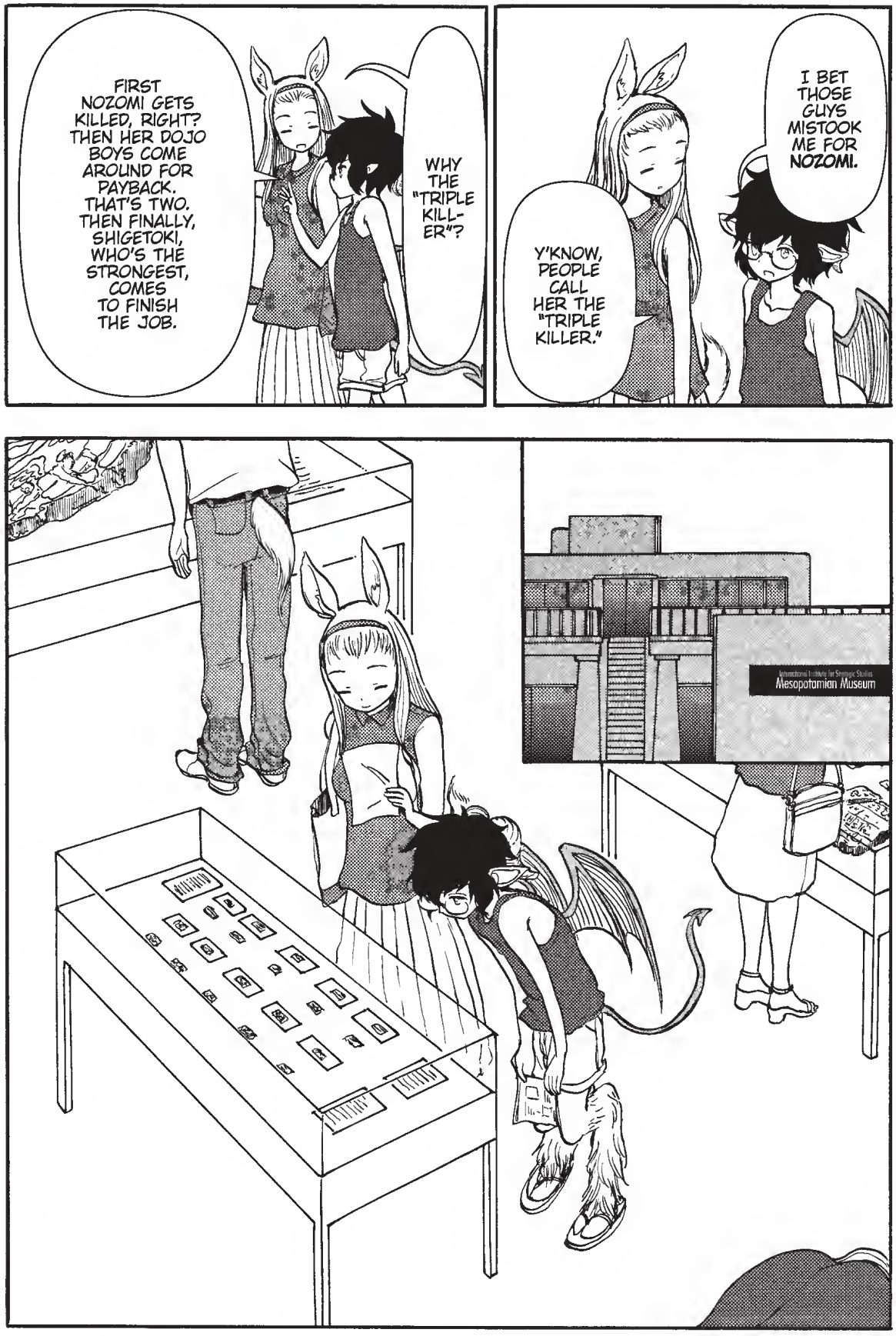

Nnh?
AKIRA-CHAN, IT'S ALREADY TEN.
NNGH, THANKS FOR THE UPDATE.
FLING
JOLT
EEEK!
IT'S HOT IN HERE. BESIDES, WE'RE ALL GIRLS HERE, SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
THAT'S NO WAY FOR A LADY TO SLEEP, BY THE WAY.

FIRST, GET SOME PANTIES ON.
10:05
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE READY BY NOW.
COMB YOUR HAIR.
WASH YOUR FACE.
DON'T LISTEN TO HER, KEEP GOING!
JEEZ, WHAT ARE YOU, MY MOM?

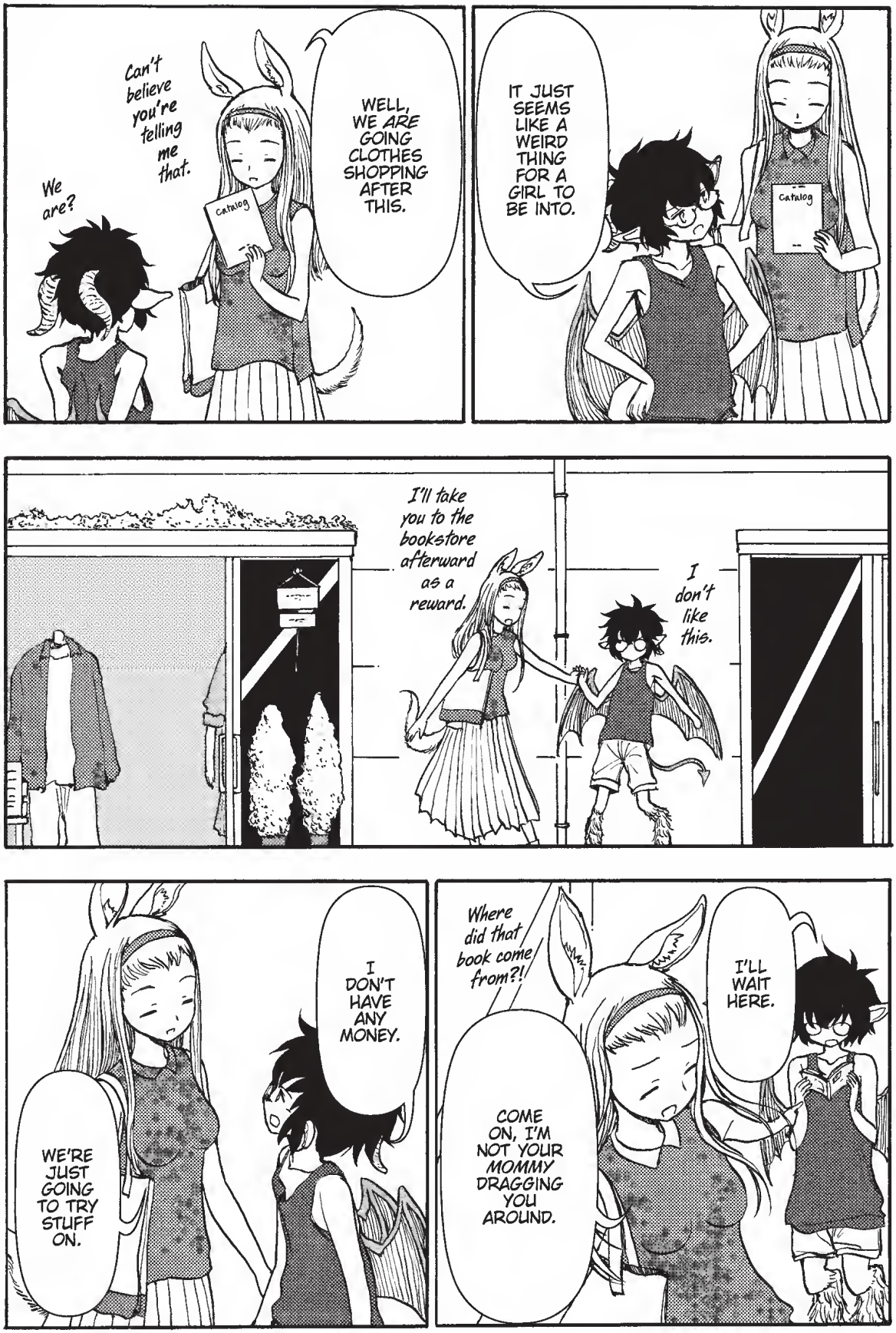
YOU'VE GOT SUCH A WELL-DEFINED NOSE AND EYES-- YOU DON'T EVEN *NEED* MAKEUP.
SEE? IF YOU TAKE PROPER CARE OF YOUR-SELF...
...LOOK HOW CUTE YOU LOOK.
DO I *LOOK* LIKE I OWN THAT KIND OF THING?
Hey, don't just go rummaging.
HEYYY, I JUST WENT TO ALL THAT TROUBLE MAKING IT LOOK NICE.
DO YOU HAVE A RIBBON OR SOME-THING?

HEY, CHECK OUT THE CRADLE ROBBER.
ALL MY CLOTHES LOOK LIKE THIS ANYWAY, SO IT'S NOT WORTH IT.
YOU ARE *IMPOSSIBLE*. LET'S GO LOOK AT CLOTHES LATER.
SEE? YOU DON'T PUT ANY EFFORT IN, SO YOU LOOK LIKE A LITTLE BOY.
YOU SURE IT'S NOT JUST THAT *YOU* LOOK *OLD*?
OH, SORRY.
WHAT'S UP, CHICA? TRYIN' TO GET MY ATTENTION?
BAM
JEEZ, YOU'RE SO *MEAN!*

WHO THE HELL'S THIS KID?
SMACK
COME ON NOW, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CAME ON TO ME.
LET GO OF ME!
HEY, WHAT THE--?!
C'MON, LET'S GO.
HEY, SORRY ABOUT MY FRIEND HERE, HE'S JUST BEIN' DUMB.
I'M NOT THE ONE YOU HAVE TO EXPLAIN THAT TO!
WHAT?! BUT I WAS SERIOUSLY JUST TEASING!
DUDE. THAT KID IS FRIENDS WITH SHIGE-TOKI-KUN, DUMB-ASS!
KA-KLOP
I wasn't really gonna do anything. I'd be dead meat if I got nabbed by the cops.
HEY, WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? I WAS JUST TEASING THEM A LITTLE.
Thank you.
Moof!


FIRST NOZOMI GETS KILLED, RIGHT? THEN HER DOJO BOYS COME AROUND FOR PAYBACK. THAT'S TWO. THEN FINALLY, SHIGETOKI, WHO'S THE STRONGEST, COMES TO FINISH THE JOB.
WHY THE "TRIPLE KILL-ER"?
Y'KNOW, PEOPLE CALL HER THE "TRIPLE KILLER."
I BET THOSE GUYS MISTOOK ME FOR NOZOMI.
International Institute for Semitic Studies
Mesopotamian Museum

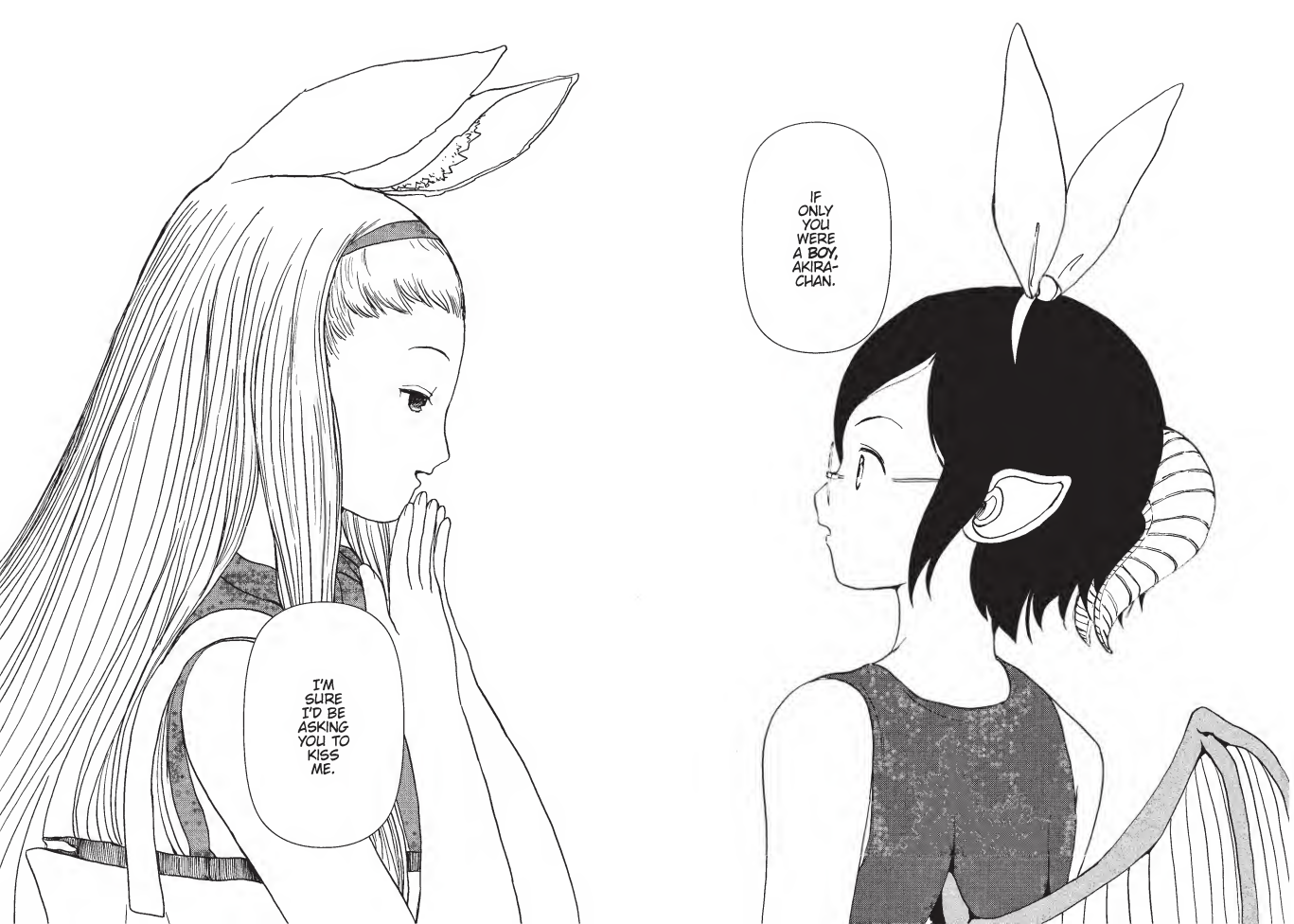
YEAH.
THIS REALLY BRINGS 'EM TO LIFE, DON'T YA THINK?
CHECK IT OUT, THEY LOOK SO DIFFERENT FROM HOW THEY LOOK IN BOOKS.
Catalog
NO, IT'S INTER-ESTING.
SORRY, IS THIS BORING?

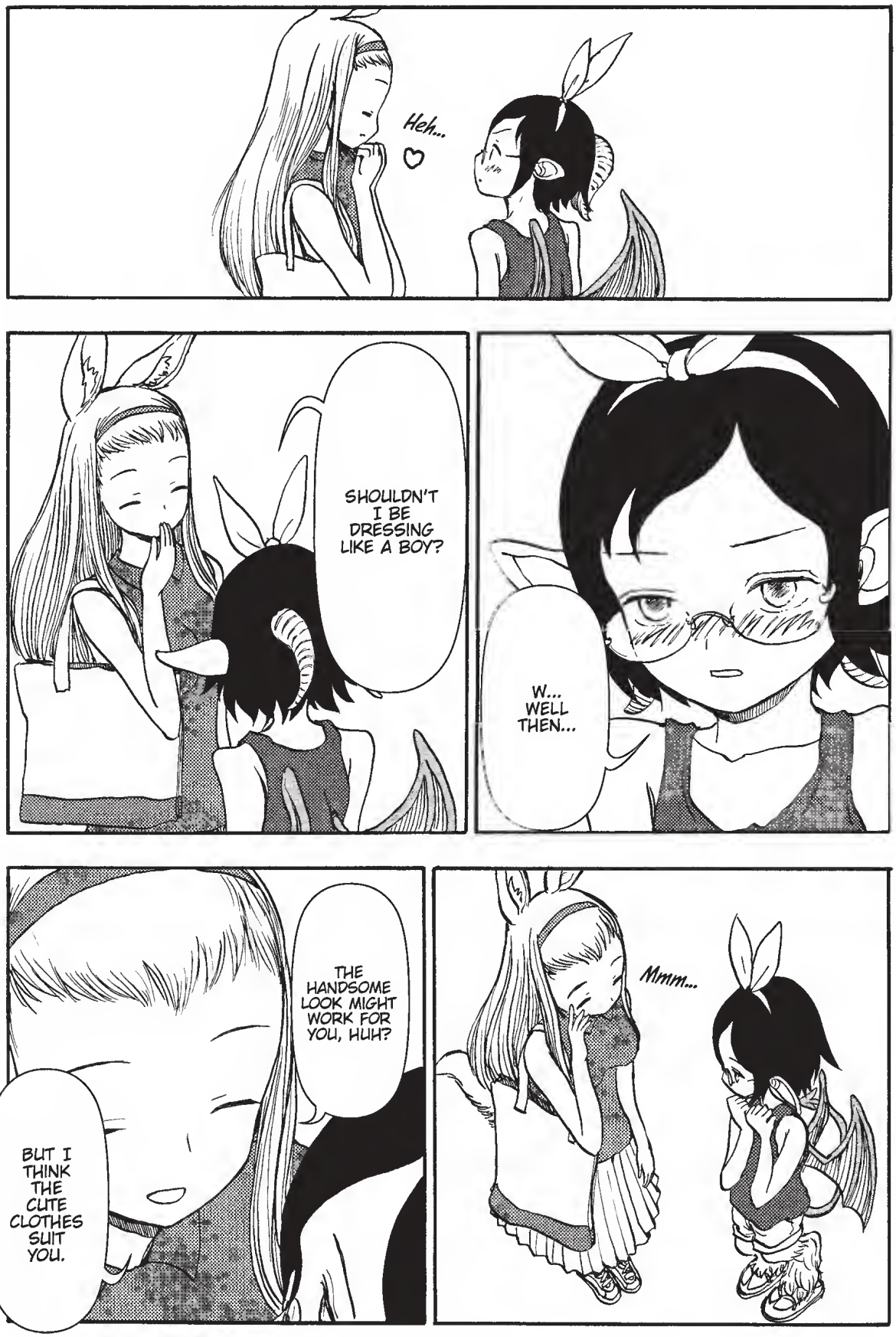

Can't believe you're telling me that.
We are?
WELL, WE ARE GOING CLOTHES SHOPPING AFTER THIS.
Catalog
IT JUST SEEMS LIKE A WEIRD THING FOR A GIRL TO BE INTO.
Catalog
I'll take you to the bookstore afterward as a reward.
I don't like this.
I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.
WE'RE JUST GOING TO TRY STUFF ON.
Where did that book come from?!
I'LL WAIT HERE.
COME ON, I'M NOT YOUR MOMMY DRAGGING YOU AROUND.

DOESN'T SUIT ME.
THAT ISN'T TRUE! LOOK.
YOU LOOK SO CUTE!
CLAP
CLAP
THIS IS ALL WE ENDED UP BUYING.
WELL, YOU DIDN'T BRING MONEY.
BUT YOU LOOK CUTE!
DON'T PET ME.

HOW COME?
Nothing weird about having a type.
YOU REALLY ARE WEIRD.
I DUNNO. 'CUZ YOU'RE CUTE?
WHY ARE YOU SO PERSIST-ENT?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.
AND KIMIHARA IS WAY CUTER.
NOZOMI'S GOT THE EXACT SAME FACE.
AM I, THOUGH?

NAW, THERE'S JUST SOMETHING CUTE ABOUT YOU, AKIRA-CHAN.
WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I'M BEING MADE FUN OF?
NOZOMI-CHAN DOESN'T HAVE THAT SAME STAND-OFFISH VIBE.
AND HIME-CHAN, IT'S LIKE SHE ALWAYS HAS A SPOTLIGHT ON HER, NO MATTER WHAT SHE DOES OR HOW SHE'S DRESSED.
NADESHIKO, ARE YOU A LESBIAN?
MMM, HARD TO SAY.
QUIT HUG-GING ME!
Are those sisters? So cute!
BUT I CAN'T SAY YOU'RE COMPLETELY OFF THE MARK.
WELL, MAYBE NOT.
Which is it?
Not like them, anyway.
MAYBE NOT EXACTLY.

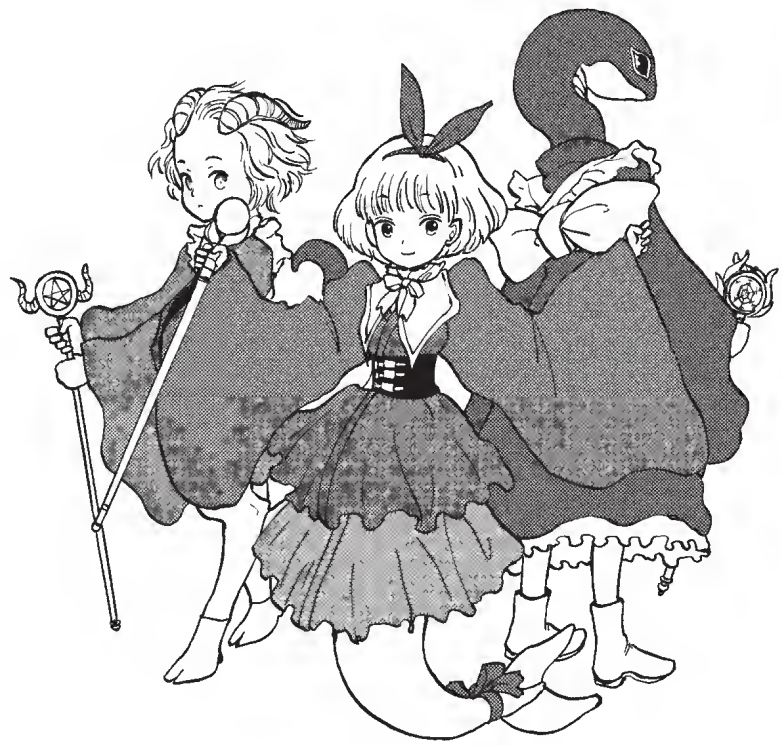

I'M SURE I'D BE ASKING YOU TO KISS ME.
IF ONLY YOU WERE A BOY, AKIRA-CHAN.

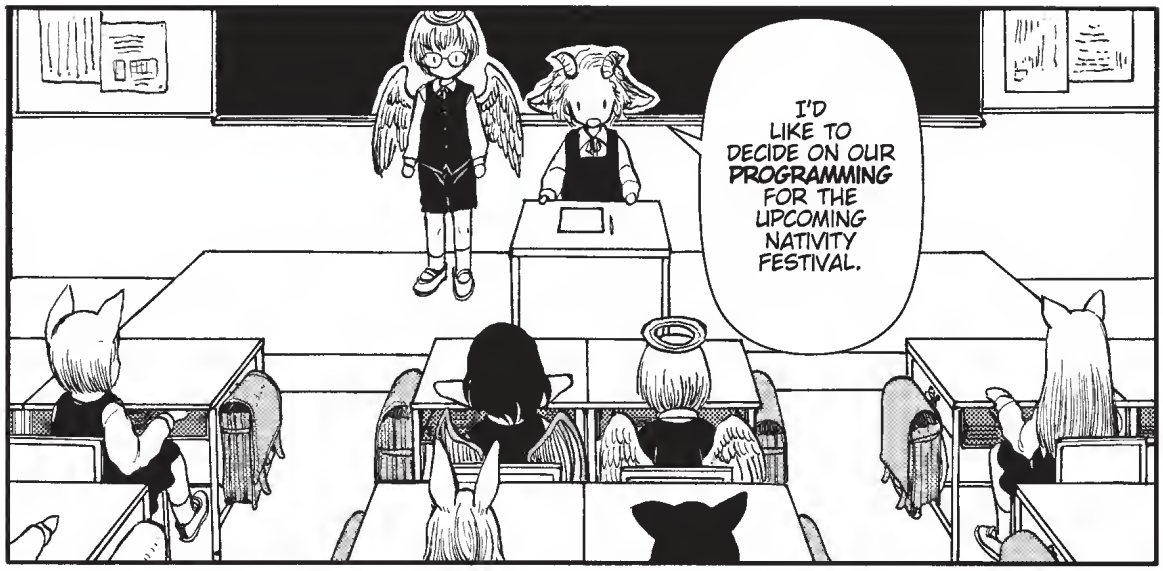

Heh...
SHOULDN'T I BE DRESSING LIKE A BOY?
W... WELL THEN...
THE HANDSOME LOOK MIGHT WORK FOR YOU, HUH?
BUT I THINK THE CUTE CLOTHES SUIT YOU.
Mmm...

A CentaUr's Life

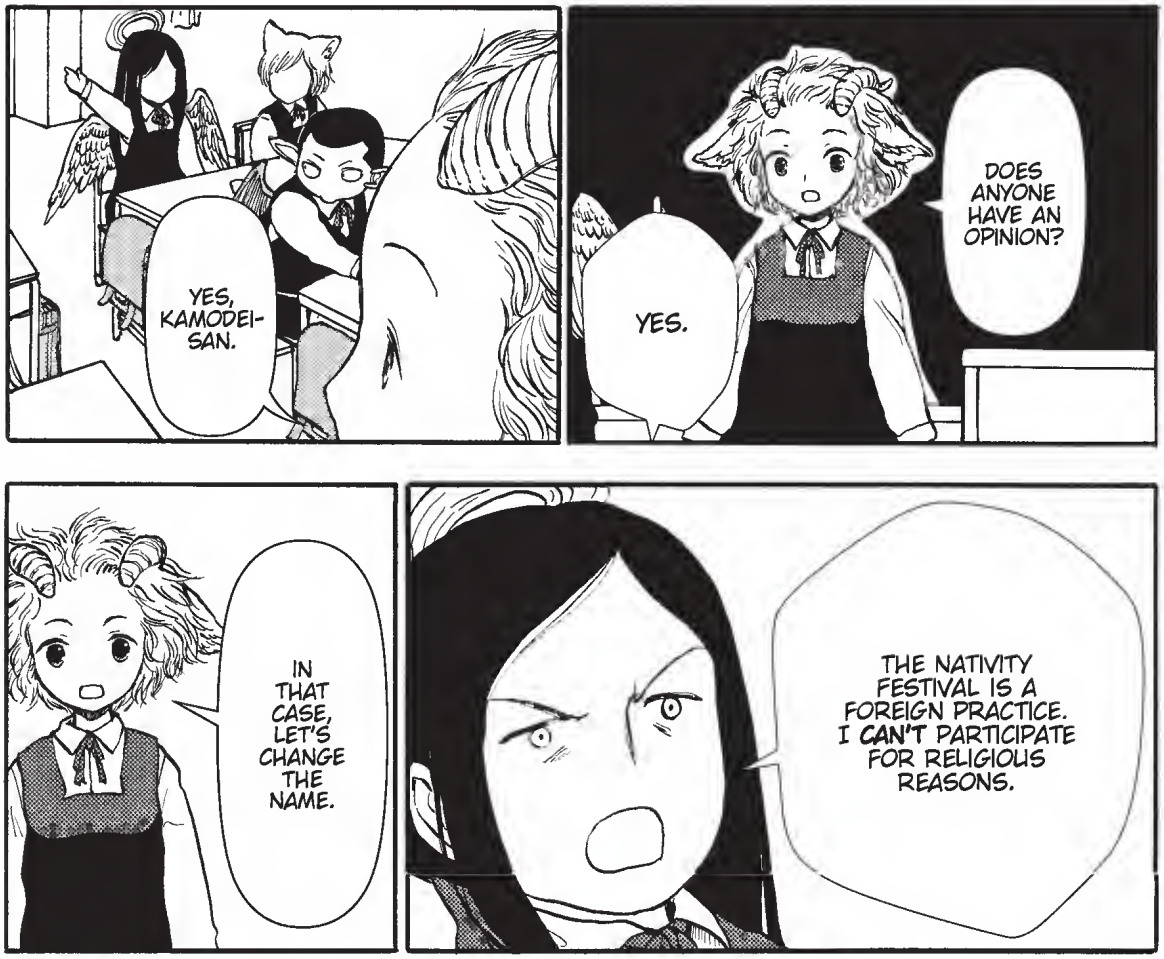
HEROES OF THE FANTASY WORLD:
MAGICAL GIRL SERIES

IT WASN'T JUST THE GENDER OF THE TARGET AUDIENCE OR THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ANIME AND *TOKUSATSU* THAT DISTINGUISHED MAGICAL GIRL SERIES FROM ACTION HERO DRAMAS. ACTION HERO DRAMAS TYPICALLY DEPICTED OVERPOWERED PROTAGONISTS--WHO OFTEN WEREN'T EVEN HUMAN--DOING BATTLE WITH LIKEWISE OVERPOWERED AND EXTRAORDINARY ANTAGONISTS. BUT IF YOU WERE TO REMOVE THE MAGIC FROM MAGICAL GIRL SERIES, YOU'D FIND THAT THEY LARGELY DEALT WITH MORE-OR-LESS DOWN-TO-EARTH GIRLS SOLVING REAL LIFE, EVERYDAY PROBLEMS, ALBEIT SYMBOLIZED IN THE FORM OF SUPERNATURAL ANTAGONISTS. THIS, OF COURSE, MEANT THAT THE GIRLS IN QUESTION HAD TO BE PORTRAYED AS TRUE-TO-LIFE RACES. IN ORDER TO BALANCE THIS TASK WITH THE NEED FOR RACIAL EQUALITY, THE STUDIO STRATEGIZED TO HAVE THE RACE OF THE PROTAGONIST CHANGE WITH EACH NEW SERIES. EVEN IF THE PLUG WERE PULLED DUE TO LACK OF POPULARITY, THEY COULD DEFLECT ANY CRITICISM OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BY STRESSING THEIR INTENDED PLANS. LUCKILY, MAGICAL GIRL SERIES PROVED POPULAR, SPAWNING A NUMBER OF SEQUEL SERIES.



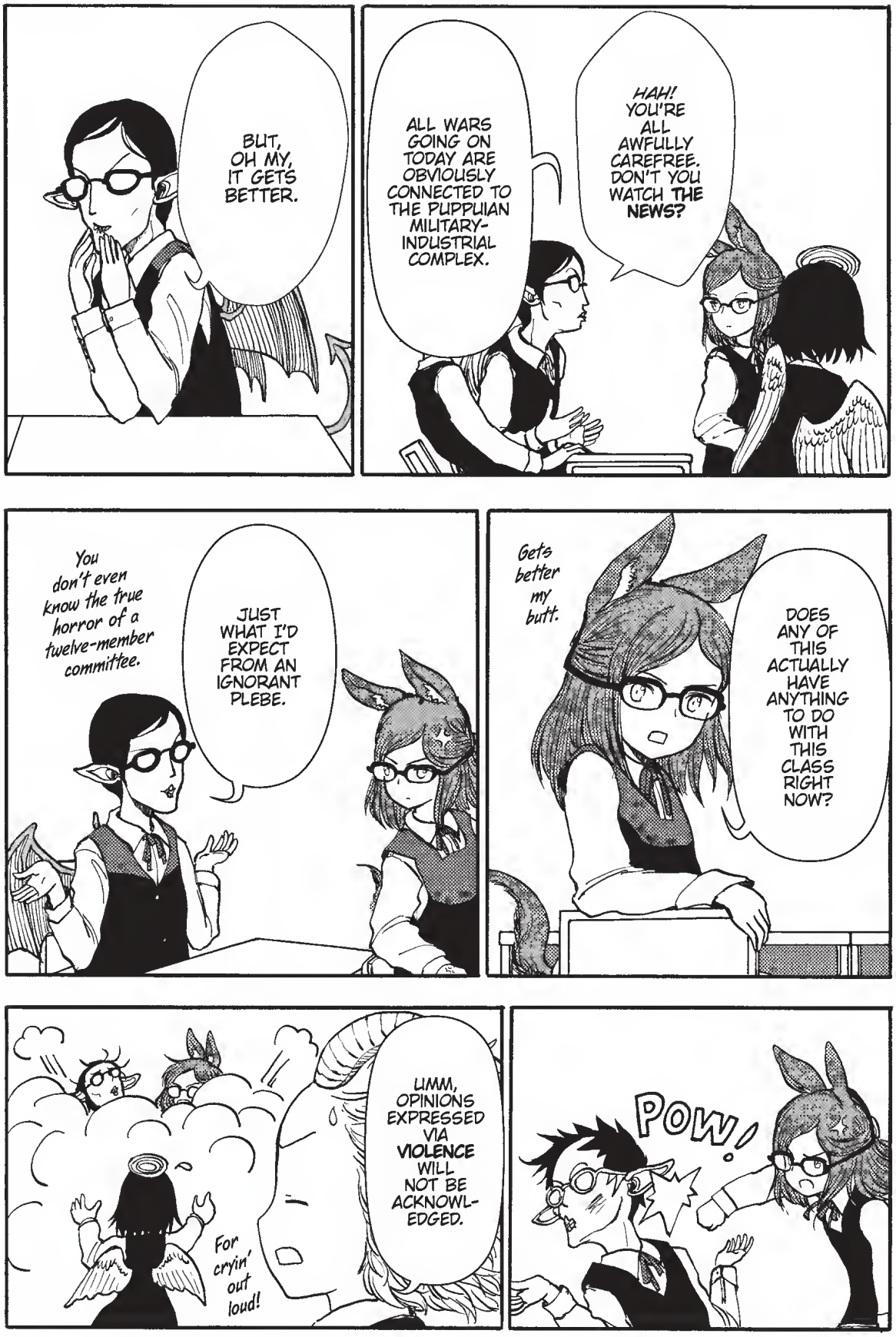

I'D LIKE TO DECIDE ON OUR PROGRAMMING FOR THE UPCOMING NATIVITY FESTIVAL.

CHAPTER 60


YES, KAMODEI-SAN.
YES.
DOES ANYONE HAVE AN OPINION?
IN THAT CASE, LET'S CHANGE THE NAME.
THE NATIVITY FESTIVAL IS A FOREIGN PRACTICE. I CAN'T PARTICIPATE FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS.

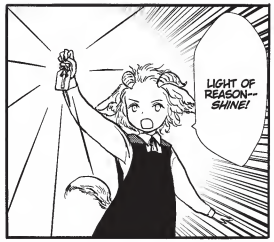
NONE OF THAT STUFF!
THAT'S JUST YOUR RELIGION!
LET'S CALL IT THE PHI FESTIVAL!!
EVERYBODY SATISFIED? GOOD. NOW ABOUT OUR PROGRAM-MING.
It never had anything to do with religion in the first place-- the name was just for exotic flair.
FINE, LET'S DROP THE RELIGIOUS ANGLE ENTIRELY AND JUST CALL IT "THE WE GOT THROUGH SECOND SEMESTER IN ONE PIECE FESTIVAL."
BUT I'M ENTITLED TO MY OWN RELIGION, AND TO JOIN IN OUR EVENTS!
WE'RE GOING WITH THE SEMESTER IN ONE PIECE THING. SO, THE PROGRAMMI--
NOT ACCEPT-ABLE!
BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE FAIR TO PEOPLE OF OTHER RELIGIONS.
OTHERWISE THE DIVINE SIGNIFICANCE OF PHI WON'T BE CLEAR TO PEOPLE!
NO. IT HAS TO BE THE PHI FESTIVAL.

WE MUST VALUE EACH PERSON'S INDIVIDUAL OPINION!
NOT JUST SUCCUMB TO MAJORITY RULE! ISN'T THAT WHAT IT MEANS TO COME TO A CONSENSUS ?!
QUIT MAKING SELFISH DEMANDS.
YEAH!
WE SHOULDN'T BE OBSERVING A HOLIDAY ON THAT DAY TO BEGIN WITH.
EXACTLY. I SEE YOU ALSO UNDER-STAND THE ALMIGHTY PHI.
THERE ARE TIMES WHERE ONE PERSON IS RIGHT AND EVERYONE ELSE IS CRAZY.
THAT IS COR-RECT.
No elementary school student knows what you're talking about.
And the date can't be changed anyway!
HEY, NO CONSPIRACY THEORIES, PLEASE.
...ALL SO THAT THEIR WORLD DOMINATION CONSPIRACY GOES UNABATED.
IT'S JUST A PLOY BY THE SECRET CLAN OF PUPPUIANS, WHO ARE IN TURN CONTROLLED BY THE PROFIT ADULT HOUSE...

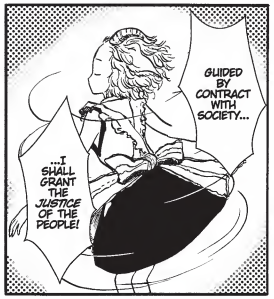

BUT, OH MY, IT GETS BETTER.
ALL WARS GOING ON TODAY ARE OBVIOUSLY CONNECTED TO THE PUPPUIAN MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.
HAH! YOU'RE ALL AWFULLY CAREFREE. DON'T YOU WATCH THE NEWS?
You don't even know the true horror of a twelve-member committee.
JUST WHAT I'D EXPECT FROM AN IGNORANT PLEBE.
Gets better my butt.
DOES ANY OF THIS ACTUALLY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS CLASS RIGHT NOW?
UMM, OPINIONS EXPRESSED VIA VIOLENCE WILL NOT BE ACKNOWL-EDGED.
For cryin' out loud!
POW!

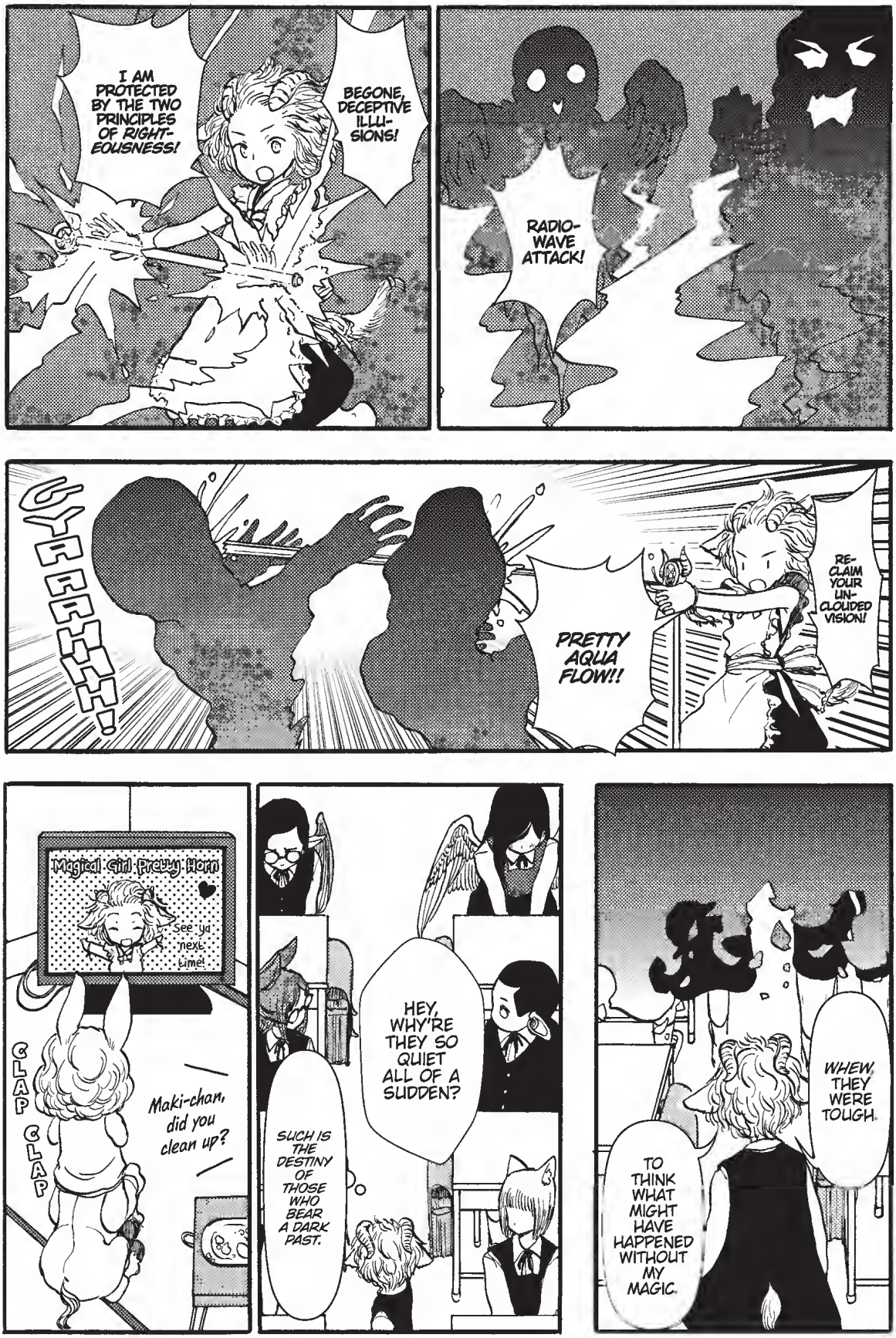
IT'S A TAUTOLOGY.
THAT'S JUST THE MAJORITY LABELING THE MINORITY "WEIRD" JUST BY VIRTUE OF THEM BEING THE MINORITY.
WRONG.
ARE WE SURE MAJORITY RULE ISN'T THE WAY TO GO?
THERE'S ONLY GONNA BE LIKE ONE OR TWO WEIRDOES. WE CAN JUST DISQUALIFY THEIR SAY.
PLEASE REFRAIN FROM REFERRING TO UNCERTAIN MATTERS.
UGH, HE'S MAKING THIS HARDER BY BEING PARTLY RIGHT.
EVERY-ONE WAS CRAZY, AND THE WHOLE COUNTRY FELL APART.
I MEAN, THAT'S JUST HOW IT WAS WITH JAPAN DURING THE WAR, RIGHT?
Tautolo-me?
TAU-TOLO-WHO?
NO...THIS IS THE DISTORTION BROUGHT ON FEAR, IGNORANCE, LACK OF VISION, AND GROUNDLESS LUST FOR SUPERIORITY!
RADIO INTERFER-ENCE?
THE DEMOCRATIC SPACE IS DISTORTING!
The end is near!
YOU'RE ALL WRONG FOR NOT BELIEVING IN THE ALMIGHTY PHI!
CON-SPIRACY THEORY IS THE PRODUCT OF LOGICAL THOUGHT!
DON'T LUMP ME WITH RELIGIOUS NUTS.

I AM... MAGICAL GIRL PRETTY HORN!

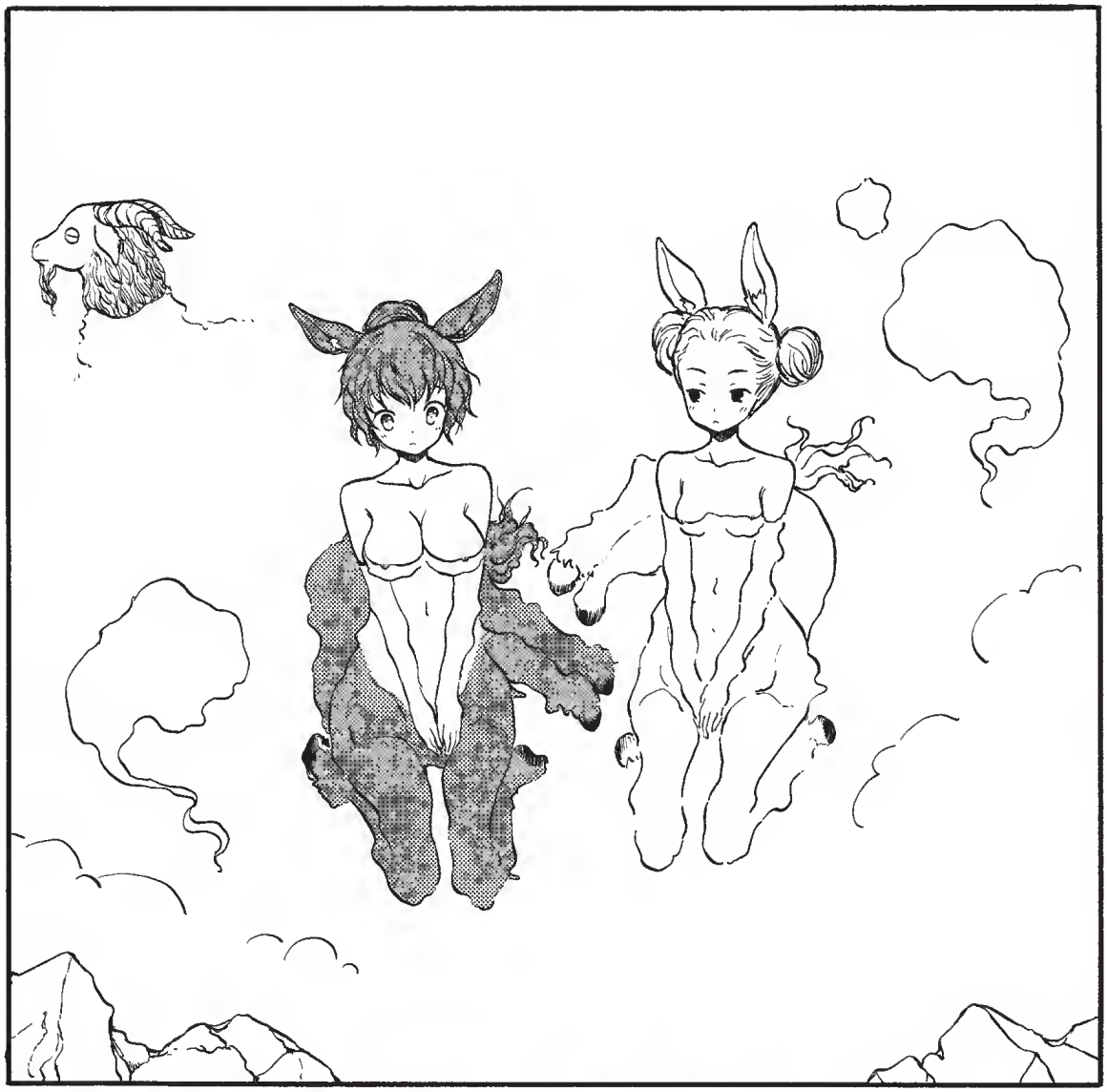

LIGHT OF REASON--- SHINE!

EN-LIGHTEN MANKIND!

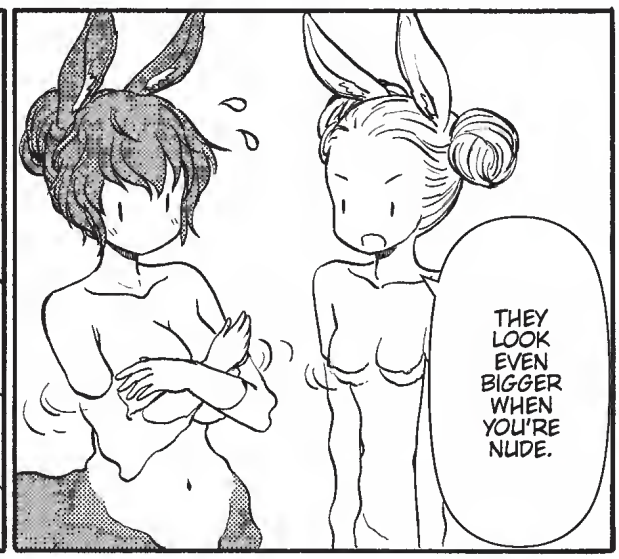

GUIDED BY CONTRACT WITH SOCIETY... ...I SHALL GRANT THE JUSTICE OF THE PEOPLE!


I AM PROTECTED BY THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF RIGHT-EOUSNESS!
BEGONE, DECEPTIVE ILLU-SIONS!
RADIO-WAVE ATTACK!
GYAAAHH!
PRETTY AQUA FLOW!!
RE-CLAIM YOUR UN-CLOUDED VISION!
Magical Girl Pretty Horn
See ya next time!
CLAP CLAP
Maki-chan, did you clean up?
HEY, WHY'RE THEY SO QUIET ALL OF A SUDDEN?
SUCH IS THE DESTINY OF THOSE WHO BEAR A DARK PAST.
WHEW, THEY WERE TOUGH.
TO THINK WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT MY MAGIC.

A CentaUr's Life



YOURS WILL GET BIG SOON TOO, AYAKA-CHAN.


THEY LOOK EVEN BIGGER WHEN YOU'RE NUDE.

AND WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE IN A HOT SPRING, ANYWAY?
YOURS HAVE BEEN BIG SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HAVEN'T THEY?
Teacher, why is there a grown-up in our class?
AH, ENTRANCE EXAMS... SAY, WHAT'S YOUR LEAST FAVORITE SUBJECT?
MRM, MAYBE MATH?
YOU'VE GOT ENTRANCE EXAMS COMING UP.
THIS IS TO HELP YOU RELAX.
BUT THAT WAS JUST LUCK! STOP WORRYING ABOUT TRYING TO WIN AND JUST RELAX!
BURBL BURBL BURBL
100%.
AND WHAT WAS YOUR SCORE ON THE MATH PORTION OF YOUR ENTRANCE EXAM?
HUH?
ERR...
You checked your own score, right?

THE DIVISION OF KANATA LAND AND WARRIORS' RETURN TO FARMING

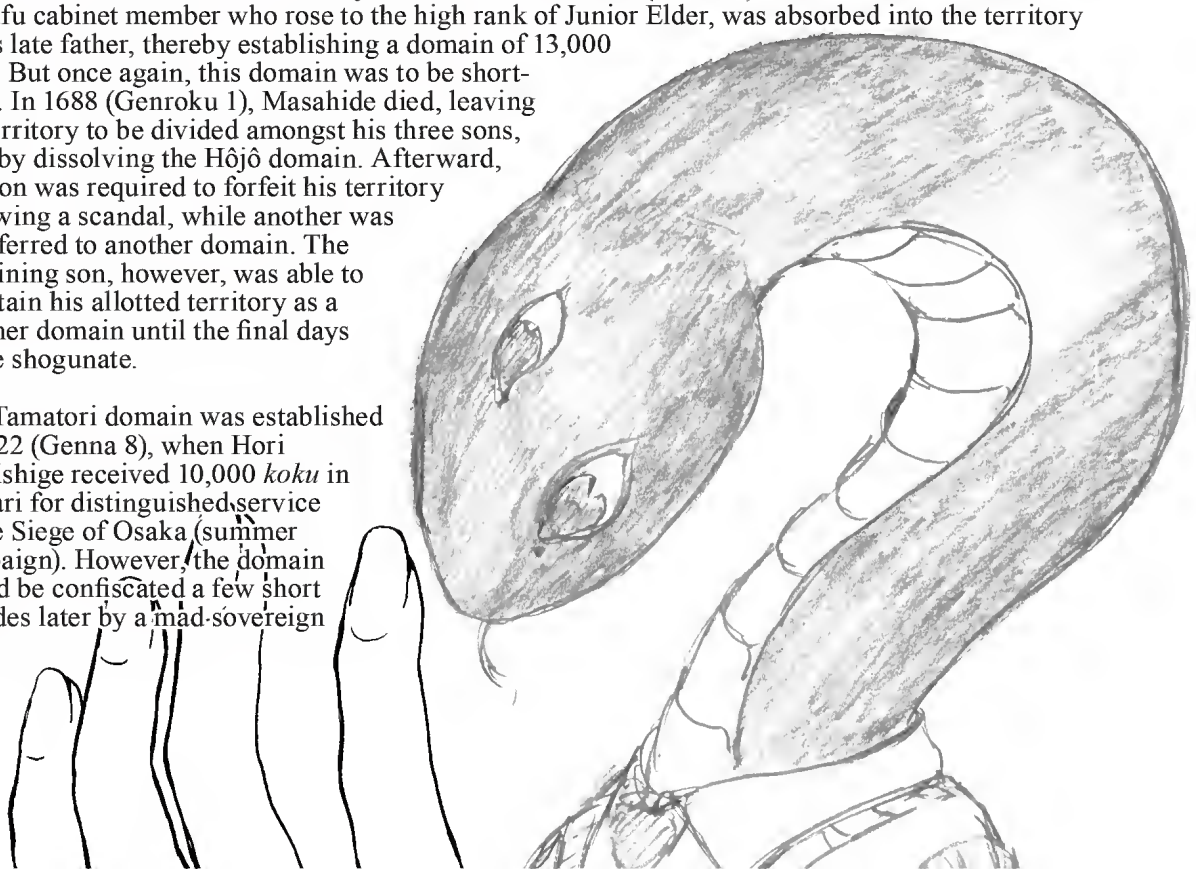
At the close of the *Sengoku* period, control of the old fiefdom of Hidachi shifted from the Oda clan into the hands of the Satake clan, only for the Satake to be relocated to Ideba following the Battle of Sekigahara. The remaining land of Kanata was divided up into a number of small splinters, including Bakufu domains, retainer domains, religious domains, and various other satellite domains. Furthermore, the division of those domains was subject to rapid and frequent change throughout the course of the Edo period, and the land had little political stability during this time.

One such small domain located in south Kanata, known as Yatabe, was bestowed to Hosokawa Okimoto. Combined with Okimoto's existing domain in Motegi, he was able to establish a domain of 10,000 *koku*. Okimoto was the younger brother of Hosokawa Tadaoki, founding father of the Higo domain in Kyushu. The Yatabe domain would prove to be the sole bastion of stability in the region, and would later be the birthplace of inventor Iizuka Igashichi. He would become well known for a number of farming tool and timepiece creations, the first of which was an automatic grain separator, as well as for using precise measurement methods to create highly accurate maps, making him a predecessor to Inou Tadataka.

The Hôjô daimyô domain was established at two separate times. The first time was in 1610 (Keichô 15), when Sakuma Katsuyuki was granted the 3,000-*koku* Hôjô territory located in northern Kanata. When combined with territories in Shinano-no-kuni and Oumi-no-kuni, the controlled territory amounted to a total 10,000-*koku*, thus establishing the daimyô domain. Katsuyuki once served as a general under Oda Nobunaga, eventually marrying into the family of Sassa Narimasa. Following the demise of Narimasa, he served under the Hôjô clan, after whose demise he served under Gamô Ujisato, and then Hideyoshi. He served in the eastern army during the Battle of Sekigahara, thereby at last becoming a daimyô. However, his domain lasted only five short years. In 1615 (Keichô 20), Katsuyuki distinguished himself in battle at the Siege of Osaka (summer campaign) and was absorbed into Naganuma, then establishing the 18,000-*koku* Shinano-no-Kuni Naganuma domain and abandoning the Hôjô domain.

The second establishment of the Hôjô domain came in 1682 (Tenna 2), when Hotta Masahide, a Bakufu cabinet member who rose to the high rank of Junior Elder, was absorbed into the territory of his late father, thereby establishing a domain of 13,000 *koku*. But once again, this domain was to be short-lived. In 1688 (Genroku 1), Masahide died, leaving his territory to be divided amongst his three sons, thereby dissolving the Hôjô domain. Afterward, one son was required to forfeit his territory following a scandal, while another was transferred to another domain. The remaining son, however, was able to maintain his allotted territory as a retainer domain until the final days of the shogunate.

The Tamatori domain was established in 1622 (Genna 8), when Hori Toshishige received 10,000 *koku* in Niihari for distinguished service in the Siege of Osaka (summer campaign). However, the domain would be confiscated a few short decades later by a mad sovereign ruler.



Only the 2,000-*koku* retainer domain left to Toshishige's second son, Toshinao--which would become the modern-day Kurihara district of Kanata City--was passed down.

The area that composed what is now the Sakura district fell under the umbrella of the neighboring Tsuchiura daimyô domain during the course of the Edo period.

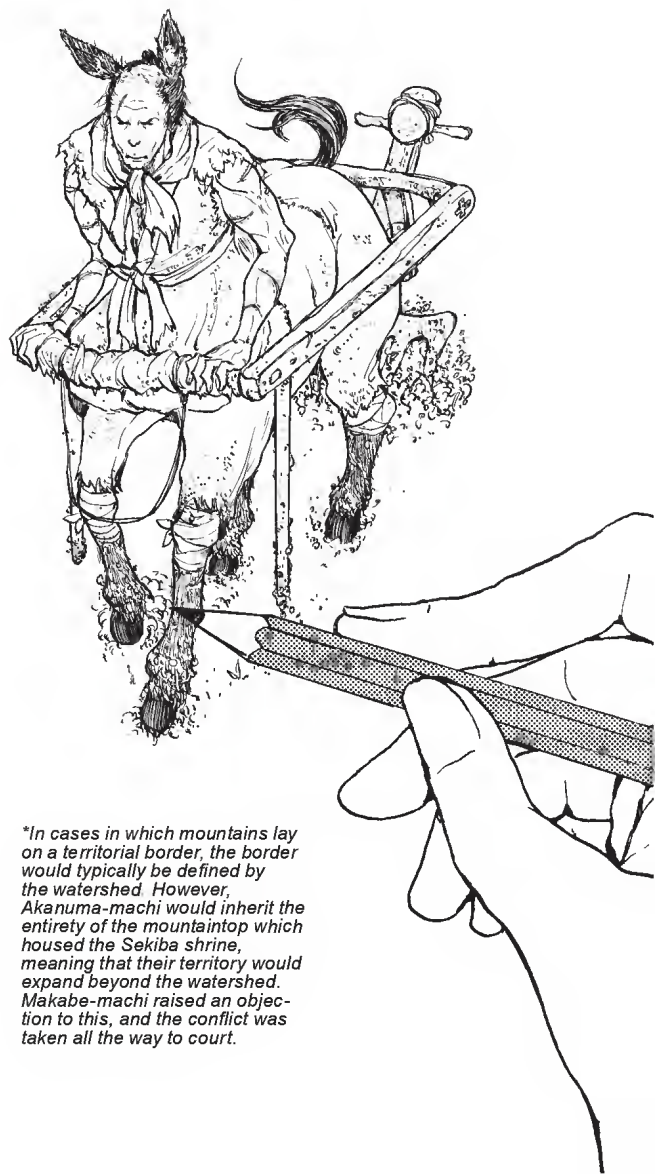
Likewise, the regions composing modern-day Mizumori, Kamisugama, and Nakasugama would fall under the umbrella of the neighboring Kobari domain, while the former Akanuma-machi (modern-day Kanata City, Akanuma district) would become the territory of a branch family within the Makabe domain. Many other daimyô domains such as that of Kasama and Ishioka were also situated in regions of what would become modern-day Kanata City.

There were also many detached territories held remotely by scattered daimyô domains. The Mutsu-no-kuni Sendai, Oumi-no-Kuni Takatô, and Kouzuke-no-Kuni Maebashi domains all held territory in Kanata. In addition to these were many retainer domains smaller than 10,000 *koku*. Along with the aforementioned Hori and Hotta families, the Yura clan--descendants of Nitta Yoshisada--held an encampment in what is now Ushiku City.

The summit of Mount Sekiba became a spiritual grounds, housing temples and shrines. The twin peaks of Mount Sekiba had already long been hailed as two mighty deities, but in the year 782 (Enryaku 1), the temple known as Chuuzenji was erected by the monk Tokuitsu, and it became a syncretization of Shinto and Buddhism.

Chuuzenji would later be abandoned as a result of an edict mandating the separation of Shinto and Buddhism, but this coincided with the founding of the Mount Sekiba shrine which still exists today. This use of the mountain's summit as a temple ground would later lead to a territorial conflict between Makabe-machi (modern-day Makabe City, Makabe District) and Akanuma-machi*.

And so it was that small regions were divided up, many of them no longer even centrally tied to Kanata. Kanata, which was also far from any main roadways, had become a mere grassland. Gone was any trace of the burgeoning political waypoint Kanata had been in the Heian and medieval days. The Merfolk who had once served as aquatic transportation across the Katori inland sea vanished from the region. As the Sengoku era drew to a close and retainers found themselves lordless (the lords having either perished or gone afar), a considerable number of soldiers chose to revert to simple farming lives. The Arai clan, who had once served under Oda, reverted to a farming lifestyle right at their own castle (Onozaki Fortress). For the many warriors of the centaur race, however, the road ahead would be difficult. The physical structure of their feet made work in the rice paddies impossible. In the beginning, they led arduous lives performing the relatively low-producing field farming of wheat and other crops. But as the aftershocks of centuries of violence gradually subsided, society as a whole saw an uptick in productivity and circulation, giving way to the proliferation of commercial crops. The centaurs' restriction to field farming would take things in an unexpected direction.



**In cases in which mountains lay on a territorial border, the border would typically be defined by the watershed. However, Akanuma-machi would inherit the entirety of the mountaintop which housed the Sekiba shrine, meaning that their territory would expand beyond the watershed. Makabe-machi raised an objection to this, and the conflict was taken all the way to court.*

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

A Centaur's Life

story and art by KEI MURAYAMA

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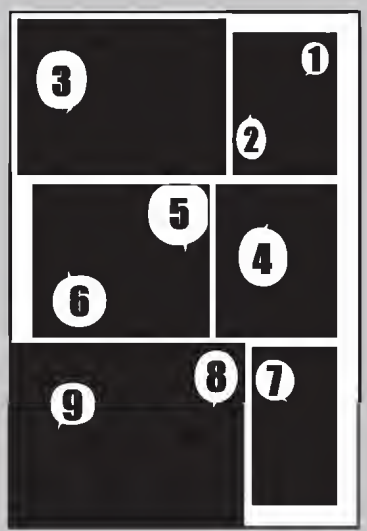
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



Everybody's favorite frilly-aproned and curly-horned magical girl is back—"Magical Girl Pretty Horn"! Meanwhile, Hime's adoring young admirer Ayaka-chan returns, and more is pondered about the armpit feathers of dinosaur-folk. Then, Hime and Shino-chan are summoned into an alternate dimension! All this and more in volume nine of *A Centaur's Life*.

HIME'S DIVINE ARROW

OLDER TEEN (16+)

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